Across Enemy Lines: a Study of the All-Party Groups in the Parliaments of Canada, Ontario, Scotland and the United Kingdom

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctorate of Philosophy
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Abstract

The Parliaments of Canada, Ontario, Scotland and the United Kingdom are now home to a growing number of informal bodies that are formed by politicians from all parties who wish to cooperate on specific policy issues or relations with other countries. Such all-party groups (APGs), which deal with topics from the steel industry to genocide prevention, work to share information, meet with stakeholders, and conduct policy studies. Most also have partnerships with external actors who support their activities. This dissertation explores why the number of APGs is rising in each jurisdiction, but also why there are relatively fewer APGs in the two Canadian cases. Using statistical analyses of APG membership patterns as well as interviews with parliamentarians, lobbyists, and journalists, it finds three main factors behind APG expansion. First, the growth of APGs has helped both parliamentarians and external actors to continue to achieve their goals despite changes in the external political environment such as rising policy complexity and increased demands from citizens. Second, APG expansion has been facilitated by the evolution and increasing modularity of the APG format, which has allowed it to be adapted to a broader range of issues and activities. Finally, the increasing acceptance of APGs as a standard tool of political advocacy has led to the creation of groups by parliamentarians and
external actors who feel it is important do so as part of broader lobbying campaigns, even if APG activity is not the most effective way to achieve their goals. The dissertation also finds that differences in APG prevalence are caused primarily by variations in levels of party discipline, with those jurisdictions that feature high discipline, such as Canada, tending to have fewer groups. Strong party discipline also limits the policy advocacy conducted by those APGs that do form in those legislatures.
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CHAPTER 1

EXPLAINING THE RISE OF ALL-PARTY GROUPS

1 Introduction

In 2010 a group of 50 Canadian members of parliament (MPs) from all parties formed the Canadian Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care (PCPCC)\(^1\) in order to investigate the issues of palliative care, suicide prevention, elder abuse, and care for persons with disabilities. Over the following year the PCPCC held a series of 24 consultations across the country, and in November 2011 published an exhaustive 190 page report that made extensive recommendations for improving the government’s handling of the issues. The report’s findings were warmly welcomed by both the Canadian Council of Catholic Bishops (2011) and medical organizations such as the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association (2011), suggesting that it was both well-balanced and well researched. In his parliamentary statement to introduce the report, Joe Comartin, the NDP House Leader and PCPCC co-founder, noted that it “demonstrates that parliamentarians of all political stripes can work co-operatively for vulnerable Canadians” (Comartin, 2011).

Given the images of conflict and name-calling that dominate the news coverage of Canadian federal politics, many Canadians would likely be surprised to hear that the country’s politicians were capable of cooperating in the public interest on any subject, let alone a politically charged issue like palliative care that often overlaps with debates around euthanasia. However, many would likely be even more surprised to find that the PCPCC operated entirely outside of the official system of parliamentary committees. This informal structure means that the committee functioned on the basis of consensus, with the views of MPs from all parties needing to be considered in group decision making. In place of the dedicated parliamentary funding received by formal committees, the production of the PCPCC’s report was financed by voluntary contributions from the office budgets of the MPs involved – contributions that reduced the

\(^1\) The names of all-party groups are italicized throughout this thesis in order to make them easier to identify.
funding available for hiring their own staff or communicating with constituents. An outside actor, the Canadian Cancer Society, then paid for the cost of printing the final document.

Figure 1.1 – Number of all-party groups at the Canadian Parliament, 37th – 41st Parliaments

Rather than a lone initiative, the PCPCC is just one of a growing number of informal parliamentary bodies that have formed in recent years – both at the Canadian Parliament and in other legislatures worldwide. These groups are referred to here as all-party groups (APGs), and are distinct from other parliamentary institutions in that they are non-partisan and have no place in the official system of parliamentary decision making. Instead, they are formed voluntarily by “members coming together on a basis of shared interests or backgrounds, independent of party” (Norton, 2008: 240). APGs generally fall into two broad categories: “inter-country groups” that seek to improve relations with other countries, international organizations, or diasporic communities, and “subject groups” that are focused on particular policy issues. Although APGs are not part of the formal parliamentary system, they do have varying degrees of institutionalization, with most having designated officers (Ringe et al., 2013). The majority of APGs are also supported by outside actors, such as lobbyists, business associations, charities, embassies, or other stakeholders. These actors often provide secretariat services and may also cover group expenses, such as refreshments at meetings, the cost of publishing of reports, or international travel. In many cases such outside groups also drive the initial creation of APGs by finding parliamentarians who are willing to take part.
While long home to a few dozen inter-country APGs, until recently Canada never had more than a handful of subject groups. Yet as shown in Figure 1.1, the past decade has seen a large spike in APG activity on Parliament Hill, with at least 26 new inter-country and 27 subject groups being founded since 2003. This expansion is unexpected since it occurred during a period of increased conflict between the main political parties, both within Parliament and beyond. However, while defying domestic trends, this expansion mirrors the growth of APGs in a wide range of legislatures worldwide, including those of Australia, Brazil, France, India, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States (Ringe et al., 2013). For instance, Figure 1.2 charts the number of APGs at the British Parliament, which has more than doubled since 1996. Similar developments can also be found among sub-national legislatures as well, with Figure 1.3 plotting the growth of APGs at the Scottish Parliament since 2003.

The common increase in the number of APGs across such a wide range of jurisdictions is unexpected, and would appear to suggest that common factors may be driving group creation. If true, this would be a highly significant finding given that political actors in very different social and institutional contexts would have responded in a similar fashion when faced with the same challenges. Yet at the same time, differences in the extent and focus of APG activity between jurisdictions also suggest that any global trend towards the creation of APGs is mediated by local forces. This variation can be clearly seen by looking at the growth of APGs in Canada and the UK outlined in Figures 1.1 and 1.2. Although both have experienced roughly the same APG
growth in proportionate terms since 2003, the Canadian Parliament still has just one-sixth as many APGs as Westminster – a gap that cannot be explained by differences in the number of parliamentarians between the two. The focus of APG activity is also very different between the two legislatures, with inter-country groups making up nearly two-thirds of the APGs in Canada, but less than a quarter of those in the UK.

2 Past research and theoretical accounts

So far the growth in the number of APGs across jurisdictions has not been matched by a parallel increase in academic research. The studies that are available come primarily from the United States, and to a lesser extent Britain and the European Parliament. Moreover, with the exception of Ringe et al.’s (2013) book on the APGs at the US Congress and European Parliament, none of this research employ a comparative approach. Together these works have put forward three theories to account for the growth of APGs. The most recent theory posits that APGs serve as networks for information exchange that help legislators to overcome the collective action problem created by the inadequate supply of information (Ringe et al., 2013). These networks create “weak ties” between legislators that cut across the barriers created by parties and formal legislative committees, thereby improving the flow of information within the legislature. Ringe

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2 The last registry of Scottish APGs that could be found prior to the May 2011 election was from December 2010. The 2015 data are from June of that year.
et al. (2013) further argue that APGs can survive despite the preponderance of weak ties thanks to the resources that groups receive from external stakeholders and the strong ties formed between the small group of legislators from each party who serve in each group’s “leadership network.” The second theory of APG activity is somewhat similar, contending that APGs serve as social networks which connect “disadvantaged legislators” to those “advantaged legislators” who have more seniority, larger electoral majorities, and formal leadership positions within the legislature (Victor and Ringe, 2009). Such ties then help disadvantaged legislators to increase their access to information and their overall influence within the legislature.

The final theory was separately put forward by three different authors, two writing about the US Congress (Hammond, 1998; Singh, 1996) and one about the British Parliament (Morgan, 1979). Each argues that “backbench” or “rank and file” legislators created APGs to help themselves adapt to changing circumstances that inhibited their ability to achieve the goals of reelection, policy change, and influence with the legislature. Specifically the authors argue that the ability of backbench members to achieve these goals was harmed by the growing complexity of policy issues, rising citizen demands, more intense media scrutiny, and institutional changes that concentrated power in the hands of senior members of each party and legislature. The creation of APGs provided legislators with a way to adapt and respond by pooling their information resources, presenting a united front on policy demands, signal to constituents, and demonstrating leadership potential for future promotion.

Of these theories, the older goal-focused approach provides the most holistic explanation for the rise of APGs. The information exchange theory is undermined by the fact that some networks do not exist to exchange information, but rather to serve as symbolic manifestations of the importance of a particular issue or group. Likewise, the social network theory is harmed by the fact that in Westminster-style legislatures junior members receive few benefits from forming closer ties with senior legislators from other parties. Both also provide no account of how APGs form, or why the numbers are growing over time. In contrast, the goal-focused approach details not only the benefits that APGs provide at any given moment, but also offers a dynamic explanation for why new groups would form and why the overall number has risen in recent decades. However, the goal oriented approach also shares three common shortcomings with the others, namely (1) a failure to consider the role of external actors in driving group creation, (2) a lack of attention to the differences in the prevalence and focus of APGs across jurisdictions, and
(3) a belief that the creation of APGs – and legislators’ participation in them – must serve an instrumental purpose related to legislative activity.

Regarding the first shortcoming, much of the (albeit limited) research that has been produced on APGs in the UK focuses on their connections to external actors both from the private sector and civil society. Some of this research suggests that APGs can be useful tools for bringing citizen and stakeholder interests into the parliamentary system (e.g. Barker and Rush, 1970; Richardson and Kimber, 1971). As such APGs would appear to offer one potential solution for improving public input into legislative decisions and responding to concerns about the “democratic deficit” in modern politics. However, other scholars raise concerns that at times the links between APGs and outside actors goes much deeper than the simple exchange of information, with the actors instead attempting to influence group decisions and even driving the creation of new groups. Such concerns are particularly clear in the writings of Jordan, who observes that “In practice [British 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... Criticism has emerged that these committees exist not so much to inform legislators as to seduce” (1985: 178). Jordan goes on to describe how the members of several subject APGs were treated to international travel as part of study tours organized by corporations and business associations. He also raised alarms over the fact that lobbyists were being appointed as APG research staff, providing them with full access to Parliament. These concerns were echoed by Doig, who stressed that relying on outside actors to provide research or secretariat services for APGs blurred the line between stakeholders and parliamentarians:

> If lobbyists act as research assistants or provide back-up to all-party groups, they are less one of several interests competing for the attention of the decision-makers than part of the process themselves. Other interests must be disadvantaged; either they have to battle to be heard before MPs or all-party groups already colonised by their competitors, or they have to adopt the tactics of their competitors (1986a: 41).

Any theory that seeks to explain the rise in the number of APGs across jurisdictions must consider the role of outside actors in driving group creation, their influence on APG activities, and the benefits that they receive from such involvement. This is not to imply that all outside actors that engage with APGs are necessarily seeking undue influence, but to avoid the question
is to assume that such actors are entirely apolitical, which is also unrealistic. As the Standards Committee of the British House of Commons observed in a recent report on APGs, the external funding [of APGs], no matter from what source, imports a degree of risk... Charles and campaign groups may wish to ensure that their view reaches Members as much as commercial organisations do... It would be naive to think that all the organisations supporting APPGs do so entirely for altruistic reasons or as a contribution to corporate social responsibility; it would be over-cynical to assume that APPGs are supported only because they directly advantage the organisation giving support (United Kingdom. House of Commons. Committee on Standards, 2013: 17).

The second difficulty with the existing theories outlined above is that they offer few insights into why the prevalence and focus of APGs would vary between jurisdictions, particularly between those that are institutionally similar. Ironically, the one comparative study of APGs that has been published, Ringe et al.’s (2013) examination of the APGs at the US Congress and European Parliament, is largely unsuited to answering the prevalence question given that the latter legislature sets a hard cap on how many APGs can operate in each parliamentary session. Ringe et al.’s broader analysis of the factors shaping the presence of APGs in advanced democracies does find that they are more common in legislatures elected using majoritarian voting systems, as well as those with a larger than average number of members or parties. However, they do not explore why the number of APGs varies between jurisdictions, lumping the British and Canadian Parliaments together within the majoritarian category despite the substantial gap in group prevalence between them. Likewise, while the goal achievement approach argues that APGs will form when situations emerge that limit the ability of legislators to achieve their objectives, such insight does not clarify what factors might hinder the formation of APGs in some legislatures or facilitate it in others. In addition, neither approach considers why the focus of APG activity would vary between jurisdictions, with some having much larger proportions of inter-country or subject groups than others.

A comprehensive theory for the growth of APGs across jurisdictions must look beyond the mere presence of groups to consider why they are much more abundant in some jurisdictions than others, and why the groups at some legislatures are more focused on relations with other countries or diasporic communities than domestic policy issues. These variations between cases suggest that some legislatures are less hospitable to APG activity, or that the parliamentarians in some jurisdictions are less amenable to the idea of cross-party cooperation. It also suggests that
APGs may play different roles in different political systems, and raises the possibility that APG growth may not result from the same forces in all cases.

The final gap in the existing theories is that they all work from the assumption that the creation and operation of APGs is a rational response by strategic, utility maximizing legislators who seek to overcome a particular problem or achieve specific goals. Such an approach is clearly evident in Ringe et al.’s discussion of the design of APGs and the costs that they impose on their members:

It is of crucial importance that the costs associated with participation in [APGs] are low because voluntary organizations designed to overcome institutional collective action dilemmas will only succeed if the transaction costs associated with creating and maintaining them are low. After all, individuals would not choose to join voluntary organizations if participation was exceedingly costly and made them worse off (2013: 6).

While it is true that certain APGs may help legislators to overcome the collective action dilemma poised by the insufficient supply of policy relevant information, there are many groups that would appear to provide few strategic benefits to their members. Indeed, many of the parliamentarians interviewed for this research reported joining APGs out of a search for personal relevance or enjoyment, with the pursuit of career or policy objectives being secondary motivations, if considered at all. In several jurisdictions the creation of APGs also appears to have become less of a means to an end, and rather an end in itself, with parliamentarians, professional lobbyists, and external stakeholders adding the establishment of APGs to the standard set of legislative tools that are employed to show that an issue is being taken seriously within the political system.

3 Research questions and design

The aim of this study is to develop a comprehensive theory explaining the recent growth of APGs in legislatures around the world. In particular, it seeks to fill a major gap in the existing literature by examining not only how legislators engage in with APGs, but also the role that non-parliamentary actors have played in their expansion. These objectives in turn lead to a series of eight research questions:

- What activities do APGs undertake?
- How do APGs operate?
• What impact do APGs have on legislative and policy outcomes?
• Why do individual APGs form?
• Why do parliamentarians take part in APG activities?
• Are there certain institutional arrangements that appear to facilitate or hinder the creation and activities of APGs?
• Why do external actors support APG activities?
• Have legislatures created sufficient safeguards to ensure that APGs are not used for inappropriate lobbying by external actors?

These research questions are investigated using a historical institutionalist approach which assumes that actors will act rationally in pursuit of their preferences, but also that actors’ preferences and behaviours can be shaped by the values and beliefs of the institutions in which they are situated. This approach enables this study to look beyond the focus on narrow rationality in previous works to consider whether the growth of APGs has been affected by changes in the institutional norms that shape legislators’ behaviour.

In addition, this research also sets out to overcome the previous studies’ lack of attention to the differences in APG prevalence and focus that exist between jurisdictions. To do so it employs a most similar systems design that applies the research questions above to four different Westminster-style legislatures: the Parliaments of Canada, Scotland, and the United Kingdom, and the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. As described further below, these cases were chosen to provide a range of variation in terms of APG prevalence while still ensuring relative institutional uniformity. Moreover, no detailed study has ever been conducted of the APGs in these jurisdictions – or in any Westminster-style jurisdiction – allowing this study to expand our knowledge of APG operations in a different legislative context.

The remainder of this section expands on the analytical approach, research design, case selection, and the research methods employed. The chapter then concludes with an outline of the following chapters and an overview of the study findings.

3.1 Analytical approach

This study employs a historical institutionalist approach to conceptualizing institutional development and change. Like rational choice institutionalism, the historical variant assumes that individuals act rationally in pursuit of their preferences, and will create institutions that
contribute to achieving them. However, like sociological institutionalism, it also accepts that individuals’ actions and even their preferences can be shaped by the formal and informal institutions in which they operate (Hay and Wincott, 1998; Steinmo, 2007).

As distinct theories of behaviour, rational choice and sociological institutionalism rest on different ontological assumptions and so cannot be readily combined. Rational choice institutionalism assumes that individuals are rational actors with established preferences who possess perfect information (Docherty, 1997). In this conception, institutions are seen only as procedures through which decisions are made. Therefore while institutions limit actors’ options and shape their strategic calculations, they do not alter actors’ preferences, which are seen to be exogenous to the analysis (Thelen and Steinmo, 1992). In contrast, sociological institutionalism holds that actors cannot be examined separately from the context in which they operate. Preferences are not seen to exist independently, but rather are made endogenous to the analysis. Specifically, they are seen to be formed within the institutional context itself, which establishes and reinforces common values and norms of conduct that mould the way their members perceive themselves, their objectives, and the options they have available. In this conception individuals are not necessarily seen to follow their rational interest, but rather to pursue behaviours that seem appropriate in a given situation (Steinmo, 2007).

Historical institutionalism seeks to bridge these two approaches. As Steinmo describes, historical institutionalists believe that “human beings are both norm-abiding rule followers and self-interested rational actors” (2007: 126). Similarly, Hay and Wincott argue that historical institutionalism is based on the premise that

actors are strategic, seeking to realize complex, contingent and often changing goals. They do so in a context which favours certain strategies over others and must rely upon perceptions of that context which are at best incomplete and which may very often reveal themselves inaccurate after the event (1998: 954).

As these descriptions imply, historical institutionalists employ an expansive definition of institutions that includes not only “formal rules and organizations” but also “informal rules and norms” (Steinmo, 2007: 124). Moreover, historical institutionalists consider not only the content of these institutions themselves, but how an individual’s behaviour is shaped by his or her perceptions and ideas regarding the institutions in which he or she operates:
a world replete with institutions and ideas about institutions. Their perceptions about what is feasible, legitimate, possible and desirable are shaped both by the institutional environment in which they find themselves and existing policy paradigms and worldviews. It is through such cognitive filters that strategic conduct is conceptualised and ultimately assessed (Hay and Wincott, 1998: 956).

This emphasis on institutions, perception and actor rationality allows historical institutionalism to take account of learning and strategic innovation over time. Furthermore, historical institutionalism also makes it possible to conceptualize institutions both as structures that shape behaviour, and as the products of past political strategies that can be altered and remade through deliberate action (Thelen and Steinmo, 1992).

The importance of the distinction between rational choice and historical institutionalism becomes clearer in the context of institutional development. Given that rational choice institutionalism assumes that individuals have fixed preferences and perfect information, it tends to produce highly functionalist accounts for the creation of new institutions (Thelen, 1999). In particular, researchers within this perspective tend to assume that the reasons for the development of an institution can be inferred from the functions that it performs. Such an approach can clearly be seen in Hammond’s discussion of the formation of all-party caucuses at the US Congress:

Caucuses are a logical response to this juxtaposition of external factors and members’ goals... Caucuses were first established and now persist because they help achieve the goals of both individual members and [Congress]. They assist members in achieving career and policy goals, and in carrying out their legislative, oversight and representational duties. Caucuses also support Congress in its institutional functions and responsibilities, including institutional maintenance (1998: 14).

This highly purposive explanation stresses that APGs were formed at Congress as a purely “logical response” to changing circumstances. It also implies that such groups would cease operation should they no longer be necessary. In contrast, historical institutionalists’ belief that individuals lack of perfect information leads them to doubt functionalist explanations of institutional development (Pierson and Skocpol, 2002). Instead, they argue that mistakes in institutional design, unforeseen changes in the external context, and the unintended way that short-term decisions play out over the long term often mean that current institutions are seldom perfectly suited to the tasks they now perform. Institutions are also often seen to continue beyond the circumstances that originally lead to their creation.
This approach to institutional development also draws attention to the importance that historical institutionalism places on the study of political processes over time. Current political behaviour is seen to be strongly influenced by the ways in which past decisions structure current institutions and therefore shape the options available to contemporary actors (Pierson and Skocpol, 2002; Thelen, 1999). Furthermore, the emphasis that historical institutionalism places on the role of history in shaping current outcomes leads many scholars to limit the applicability of their findings to a specific range of time and space. Therefore, many historical institutionalists work at the level of mid-range theory, seeking to explain variations in a smaller group of cases (Thelen and Steinmo, 1992). They also tend not to employ a deductive approach, but rather to engage in a more inductive analysis that develops theories in the course of investigating observed variations between cases (Thelen, 1999). However, this more limited, inductive approach does not suggest that historical institutionalist scholars are uninterested in the development of broader theories. Instead, such theoretical development is seen as the result of the accumulation of mid-term findings as results from one context are tested and extended to others (Pierson and Skocpol, 2002).

Ultimately, historical institutionalism is better suited to the project that I am undertaking, and particularly to conceptualizing the factors that produce differences in the number of APGs and the roles that they play between jurisdictions. The presence of such variations suggest that there are significant contextual factors that have shaped the development of APGs in each case. Historical institutionalism allows for the identification of such forces, and the determination of whether they stem from differences within parliamentarians’ preferences, the institutional environment, or even in members’ understanding of that environment. Moreover, it does not eliminate the possibility that parliamentarians could similarly have been motivated by the strictly rational approach used by past authors, but allows for the consideration of alternative explanations to ensure that one particular conclusion is not reached by default.

3.2 Study design and case selection

In keeping with the use of historical institutionalism, this study conducts a detailed, mixed-methods examination of the factors affecting the development of APGs within a small group of Westminster legislatures. The cases were chosen based on a “most-similar systems” approach (Przeworski and Teune, 1970), with each having relative institutional uniformity but variation in
the number of APGs present. However, although focused only on a specific branch of the legislative family tree, the study will draw from research on APGs at the US Congress and European Parliament in search of common trends.

While improving sensitivity to context and allowing for a detailed investigation of how actors understand their choices, this focus on a small group of assemblies will make it difficult to investigate causal relationships using associational models of causation. In particular, the study is affected by the classic problem of “many variables, few cases” (Lijphart, 1971). It is also possible that the expansion of APGs does not result from a linear correlation between variables. Instead, group formation may have begun with a small number of APGs in a limited range of policy fields. The legislators taking part in these initial groups may have secured policy changes, demonstrating the potential for such collaborative activity. Other legislators may then have been inspired by these original examples to create further APGs, leading to a growing cycle. As such, the impact of APGs may in fact be characterized by what Pierson (2000) refers to as “increasing-returns” rather than a linear relationship between the formation of APGs and some other variable. Given the different balance between subject and inter-country groups across the cases, there is also no reason to assume that the cause of APG expansion has been the same in each legislature.

To overcome these challenges, a “process tracing” approach is employed within each case (Beach and Pedersen, 2013). Hall (2003) contends that researchers employing ontologies of causation that allow for an interaction between dependent and independent variables or for causal equifinality between cases should not rely only on correlational approaches (and particularly on statistical tests) given that such ontologies violate the assumptions on which these associational techniques are based. Instead, Hall advocates for the use of a small-n approach that makes it possible to identify and analyse the processes that connect the proposed causal variables with the dependent effects they are believed to produce. These processes, which Beach and Penderson refer to as “causal mechanisms,” lead to predictions about the kinds of behaviour and actions that should be observed if the proposed mechanisms are present, enabling the theorized relationship to be tested. Further to this point, Hall stresses the difference between cases and observations, noting that while a study may employ only a small number of cases, these cases can generate many observations that can be used to test whether a causal process operates as predicted. For this research, the causal process for APG growth in each legislature will be
assessed separately, with a broader theory of APG growth being developed only if supported by the evidence.

The four cases in the study, Canada, the UK, Ontario, and Scotland, were deliberately chosen to help isolate the factors driving APG creation and the roles they play in each jurisdictions. In keeping with Mill’s method of difference (Lijphart, 1971), the strategy of using the national and one subnational legislature from two different countries allows for variation in APG incidence while simultaneously ensuring relative contextual uniformity. As illustrated in Table 1.1, there is a sharp gap in the relative prevalence of APGs among the cases, with both the British and Scottish Parliaments having a total number of groups per legislator that is several times more than their respective Canadian and Ontarian counterparts. Yet if one were to look only at inter-country groups, the number in Canada is actually higher than that in the UK on a proportionate basis. Such variation exists despite Canada and UK having strong institutional similarities, including the use of the single member plurality (SMP) electoral system, and appointed upper chambers. Focusing solely on the two national Parliaments would make it easy to assume that the differences in APG prevalence resulted from the larger number of legislators found at Westminster. Adding the two smaller subnational legislatures makes it possible to see how APG activity is affected by legislature size.

Table 1.1 – Absolute and relative prevalence of APGs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assembly</th>
<th>Elected legislators</th>
<th>Unelected legislators</th>
<th>Inter-country APGs</th>
<th>Subject APGs</th>
<th>Total APGs per elected legislators</th>
<th>Total APGs per all legislators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>845&lt;sup&gt;4&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, examining two legislatures from each political system allows for a careful analysis of the role that political culture plays in accounting for variations in APG prevalence and

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<sup>3</sup> Canadian data current as of January 2015; UK as of August 2014; Ontario as of October 2015; Scotland as of August 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Many members of the House of Lords are not actively involved in the work of the chamber. Between 2010 and 2015 the average attendance for sittings of the Lords was 485.
functions. The Scottish Parliament was founded by devolution less than two decades ago and regularly exchanges politicians with Westminster. The major parties also maintain strong organizational ties between their Westminster and Holyrood branches. Similar party integration and exchange of personnel can be seen between the parties at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and those at the Parliament of Canada (Pruysers, 2014). Recent political events in the four cases have also been fairly similar. Each has had at least one change of government since 2000, as well as at least one election that produced a majority government and one that produced a hung Parliament.

Table 1.2 – Main characteristics of cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Electoral system</th>
<th># of chambers</th>
<th># of major parties</th>
<th>Major nationalist party?</th>
<th>Level of partisan conflict</th>
<th>Influence of legislative committees</th>
<th>Tools for backbench input</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>SMP</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>SMP</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>SMP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>MMP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, while the four legislatures have strong similarities, notable differences remain. As shown in Table 1.2, Canada, the UK, Ontario, and Scotland diverge on several key variables that could shape the level of cross party cooperation, such as number of major parties, presence of a major nationalist party, the level of partisan conflict, and the strength of their legislative committee systems. Relative to the others, the UK also has a lower level of inter-party conflict as evidenced by the large amount of collaborative cross-party work that takes place in the select committee system, and the large number of MPs who are willing to rebel against their party leaders on legislative votes. As will be described further in the case studies, the British parties also lack an effective system for channelling the views of backbench members to their respective leaderships, a factor that contributes to a greater sense of independence among MPs and in turn contributes to rebellion (Garner and Letki, 2005). Scotland is also distinct for its use of a mixed-member proportional (MMP) electoral system. The presence of multiple factors that could shape

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5 Although the Bloc Quebecois had been reduced to just two MPs by 2015, it was a major nationalist party throughout most of the period studied.
APG activity in each different case underlines the importance of process tracing for developing causal explanations.

The cases chosen also provide a significant opportunity to expand our understanding of APGs. No academic study has ever been published on the APGs in Ontario or Scotland, and none has been produced regarding those in the UK since the early 1980s. Similarly, the only peer-reviewed study of Canadian APGs dates from the 1970s and was limited to inter-country groups (Levy, 1974). A most-similar systems study of APGs in Westminster legislatures therefore offers a considerable opportunity to clarify the factors have fuelled the continuing growth in APG numbers as well those that account for differences between jurisdictions. Moreover, no study has ever been published on the operation of APGs in subnational legislatures.

3.3 Research methods

The study utilizes both quantitative and qualitative approaches for data gathering and analysis to capture the forces that drive APG creation. Rather than separate endeavours, the two were highly integrated, with the trends evident in the quantitative analysis informing the selection of interviewees, while the views of respondents informed the interpretation of the quantitative findings. Given that participation in APGs is voluntary, the statistical analysis of APG membership data over several parliamentary sessions has the potential to shed light on how parliamentarians’ behaviour is affected by factors such as years of service, margin of victory, party, and gender, as well as how parliamentarians adjust their involvement in APGs in response to changes in their personal circumstances. The requirement for APGs to disclose their external support also allows us to explore what factors drive participation by external stakeholders.

Unfortunately their informal nature has meant that APGs have generally not left a large footprint in official parliamentary documents, and many of the records that once did exist have not been maintained. For instance, while each of the jurisdictions studied except Ontario maintains at least partial registries of which APGs are in operation, the UK Parliamentary Archives only retains copies of its registry for the past five years, and no registries from previous parliamentary sessions are available from the Scottish Parliament.

Thankfully, the Internet Archive and the UK Web Archive contain past APG registries for the Scottish Parliament since its founding in 1999, and for Westminster since the 1992-1997
parliamentary session. Webscraping software was used to extract the information from the registries into a dataset for analysis. The Canadian Parliament also generously provided registries for Canada’s 16 officially recognized inter-country APGs dating back to the 2004-2006 parliamentary session as well as some data for those inter-country groups that lack official support. However, the lack of a registry for Canada’s subject-focused APGs meant that a dataset needed to be constructed using searches of the internet, the Parliament’s Hansard, and newspaper archives. While a similar effort was made to construct a registry for Ontario, the small number of APGs at the provincial legislature prevented any statistical analysis. All told, quantitative analysis of parliamentarians’ participation in APGs was conducted for Canada, Scotland, and the UK. An analysis of the support offered by external organizations was also conducted for the latter two.

While the quantitative analysis revealed several trends in APG membership, developing a comprehensive explanation for the growth of APGs within each jurisdiction can only be achieved by speaking to those involved and tracking their activities. For instance, while the analysis of membership data revealed that APG involvement rises with time in office and electoral vulnerability, it cannot explain what benefits group involvement provides to members, what role APGs play in their respective institutions, or why there are fewer groups in some legislatures as compared to others.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MPs / MSPs</th>
<th>Senators / Peers</th>
<th>Lobbyists &amp; APG staff</th>
<th>Others (journalists, parliamentary staff, etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Canada</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UK</strong></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ontario</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scotland</strong></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To answer these questions, an extensive series of semi-structured interviews were also held with parliamentarians, APG staff, lobbyists, journalists, legislative officials, and academics in each jurisdiction. The number of interviews from each jurisdiction is presented in Table 1.3. I also

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6 There are 12 inter-country APGs in Canada that receive full funding from the Parliament, and a further four that receive administrative support. Further details on these 16 groups can be found in chapter 4.
attended at least one APG event in each jurisdiction except Ontario to observe how the groups operated in practice. In addition, a vast amount of secondary research was conducted using parliamentary records, news articles, and online content. Indeed, the lack of comprehensive APG registries in Canada and Ontario meant that secondary research was necessary to determine which groups were in operation and which parliamentarians were involved.

Those interviewed in each jurisdiction were chosen based on the preliminary results of the statistical analysis of group membership patterns. Given the vast number of APGs in each case except Ontario, informants were selected to capture a range of variation on potentially relevant characteristics of both the legislators in each jurisdiction as well as the characteristics of the APGs to which they belonged. Among legislators, the informants were chosen to ensure variation in length of time in office, gender, party, formal leadership positions held (e.g. cabinet or shadow cabinet), level of APG involvement, and focus of APG involvement (i.e. those who tended to join mostly intercountry groups versus those who mostly joined subject groups).

Among APGs, respondents were recruited who could speak about groups that varied based on:

- **Duration**: recently created versus well established.
- **Origin**: lobbyist initiated versus legislator initiated.
- **Nature of external support**: corporate supported versus charity or not-for-profit supported.
- **Leadership**: chaired by a government legislator versus chaired by an opposition legislator.
- **Subject group focus**: business focused versus social policy focused.
- **Inter-country group focus**: partnering with a major international ally versus partnering with a peripheral country.

### 4 Chapter outline and review of findings

Chapter Two provides the context for this study by first presenting a general overview of APGs and clarifying how they differ from other parliamentary activities like intra-party caucuses. It then reviews the APG systems in the four case study legislatures, detailing both how the number of groups in each jurisdiction has grown over time, and how the regulatory systems in each case has changed in response. This review reveals significant variations between the cases in terms of the pace of APG growth and the extent of the regulations that they face, particularly with regard to the relationships between groups and their external partners. However, a number of common
trends can also be seen, with APGs on health care issues emerging as the largest sub-type of subject group in Canada, Scotland, and the UK.

With the major similarities and differences between the cases having been identified, Chapter Three then scrutinizes the three theories that have been put forward to explain APG growth, namely the information-exchange model, social network theory, and the various goal-oriented accounts. To provide a context for the discussion, the chapter first begins with a brief review of the APG systems at the US Congress and European Parliament. It then examines each theory in depth, first laying out its major points and then identifying the shortcomings it faces in explaining the growth of APGs across jurisdictions. The chapter concludes by specifying the elements that must be part of any holistic theory of APG growth across jurisdictions. These include the ability to explain why APGs form and why the rate of formation has grown in recent years, why members and external actors choose to participate in APG activities, and what factors can aid or inhibit the emergence of APGs in different legislatures.

Chapter Four is the first bringing the study’s empirical findings to bear, reviewing the many activities undertaken by APGs and the functions they perform. Many of these, including information sharing, policy development, and parliamentary diplomacy, have been noted in past research. However, this study documents several additional functions, including the building of policy networks among external stakeholders, regional representation, event coordination, and symbolic representation. It also breaks with past research to argue that symbolic representation is the most basic function performed by APGs. While groups undertake a range of symbolic activities, such as holding celebrations to honour significant events, the very existence of an APG on for a policy issue, social group, or foreign country provides a basic level of symbolic representation to the relevant external stakeholders. This symbolic role in part helps to explain the expansion of APGs in recent years, with the increase occurring at the same time that the number of groups seeking political recognition has grown. The diverse array of activities performed by APGs also illustrates how the groups have become modular tools that can transferred across policy issues and even jurisdictions, further facilitating group expansion.

Chapter Five takes a step back to look at the structure and operations of APGs across the four jurisdictions. APG membership and executive structures vary significantly by jurisdiction, largely in keeping with the prevailing norms of interaction and patterns of cross-party tension in
each legislature. However, despite these differences, most groups actually operate in a relatively similar fashion on a day-to-day basis. First, notwithstanding their formal structures, only a small portion of APG members – and even executive officers – are regularly engaged with group activities. Second, the majority of APGs rely on at least some measure of assistance from an external actor. As a result, there is typically just a small number of parliamentarians who make decisions for each group, often with extensive input from external actors. Indeed, for many APGs it is the external actors who have the primary influence over group operations, with the parliamentary members largely just approving the activities they suggest. These realities in turn produce three major axes of conflict within APGs: between individual parliamentarians over leadership positions; between members of different parties over the proper scope of group operations; and between parliamentary members and their external supporters over the choice of group activities. Of these, it is cross-party tensions that have the largest impact on APG activities, helping to account for the variations in group prevalence between jurisdictions.

The question of group formation and dissolution is then explored more thoroughly in Chapter Six. A review of the APG registries across Canada, Scotland, and the UK reveals that on average roughly 10 to 20 percent of groups do not re-form after each election, although this figure can be higher when there is a substantial turnover among legislators. In keeping with past research, APGs were found to form following the emergence of new policy problems, the failure of existing institutions to deal with certain policy issues, or pressure from external actors. However, a range of other creation triggers was also encountered, including the emergence of new social groups seeking recognition, the arrival of parliamentarians from different social backgrounds, demonstration effects from successful groups, and inspiration from inter-parliamentary networks. In recent years this range of factors has driven the creation of APGs on overlapping subjects, leading some to collaborate and others to compete for attention. APGs may also form on opposite sides of a policy question. The dissolution of an APG may result from the resolution of the factors that prompted its creation, such as a solution to a policy problem, but most often occurs when parliamentarian who had driven its activities leaves the legislature due to defeat or retirement.

Chapter Seven shifts the focus to explore what factors motivate individual legislators to participate in APG activities. Regression analyses of APG participation by British, Canadian, and Scottish parliamentarians reveals little in the way of consistent trends across jurisdictions.
The results differ substantially from past studies at the US Congress, which had found that APG participation was higher among new Members and those with low margins of victory. Indeed, first term MPs in Canada and the UK were actually less likely to join APGs, while the link between participation and margin of victory was only visible in the UK, and even then only among subject groups. Curiously, the only consistent trends across the three cases was that women parliamentarians were more active in APGs than their male colleagues, especially in subject groups, and that government ministers were much less likely to participate in group activities.

The qualitative results shed further light on these statistical findings by suggesting that there is no one reason for legislators to participate in APGs. Some seek use their participation in the pursuit of electoral advantage or to address the concerns of their constituents. Others are motivated by personal interest in a topic or to secure information that can help with their broader responsibilities on formal parliamentary committees or within their political parties. For many parliamentarians, however, involvement in APGs is also a way to obtain a sense of relevance and even importance. Group members and particularly group leaders are often courted by outside stakeholders, allowing legislators to raise their visibility and with it their personal esteem. Parliamentarians can also gain a sense of purpose from championing policy changes, even if they know those changes are unlikely to reach fruition.

While parliamentarians officially direct APG activities, the reality remains that most groups would not exist without the support offered by their external partners. Chapter Eight explores why these outside stakeholders engage with and contribute financially to APG activities. An analysis of the stakeholders involved with the APGs at Holyrood, Ottawa, and Westminster reveals that most of the actors who take part in APG activities are actually charities or NGOs, and in recent years participation by actors of this type has grown more rapidly than participation by corporations or the associations that represent corporate interests. Although there are exceptions, corporations also tend to be involved with and contribute to those APGs that serve as broader forums for stakeholder engagement, making it harder for them to assert their own particular interests. NGOs and charities, by comparison, are often the only actors engaged with the APGs to which they belong, making it more likely that one outside actor could sway a group’s decisions.
External actors reported that they engaged with APGs in the hopes of raising politicians’ awareness of the issues within given policy sectors, and to gain parliamentary support for their policy proposals. In particular, the external actors sought to turn the group members into policy champions who would promote the desired changes with their parliamentary colleagues. Such support was seen to be particularly valuable during periods of minority government when a broad consensus amongst parliamentarians could prevent an issue from becoming caught up in partisan conflict. However, at a broader level many external actors appear to be driving the creation of APGs because doing so has become a standard lobbying tool. Indeed, guidebooks for lobbyists in Canada, Scotland, and the UK now highlight the potential utility of APGs as a way for external actors to advance their interests, and the number of APGs managed by lobby firms has grown substantially in recent years. Establishing and managing an APG is also a “deliverable” that lobbyists – whether in-house or with external firms – can provide as evidence of their productivity, even if the actual impact on policy change is minimal. Demonstration effects have also played a role, with the establishment of an APG by one actor in a given policy sector often followed by similar moves among other groups.

Chapter Nine completes the analysis by turning back to the overall question of the dissertation: why have recent years seen a sharp increase in the number of APGs active in legislatures worldwide? It concludes that this trend results from three major factors: a convergence of interests between backbench parliamentarians and external actors on the benefits of APG participation, the emergence of a APGs as a modular tool for parliamentary activity, and the acceptance of APGs as part of the standard practices for parliamentarians and external stakeholders wishing to take action on a given issue. The growth in the number of APGs has primarily been possible because the groups have helped both legislators and external actors to adapt to changes in the broader political environment, such as rising complexity and increased demands from citizens. In particular, involvement with the groups helps both sides to achieve their objectives, with the former seeking new ways to build their electoral profiles, obtain policy change, and/or gain a sense of relevance, while the latter seeking new tools to influence government and legislative decisions.

However, this convergence of interests did not develop in all policy issues or subjects simultaneously. The initial APGs that formed in each jurisdiction demonstrated the influence that the groups could potentially have on policy outcomes, as well as the possible benefits that their
operations could provide to both parliamentarians and external actors. Yet they also tended to focus on a narrow range of issues and employ a limited range of organizational structures and advocacy strategies. Therefore while these initial groups inspired the creation of additional APGs, the new APGs that they inspired tended to deal with similar issues that could be addressed through similar means. However, these new groups were never exact copies of those that came before, but slowly experimented with new models of group organization, external funding, and advocacy tactics – many of which were eventually adopted existing APGs. As time went on this process of incremental innovation made APGs increasingly modular, with different groups employing the organizational structures, funding arrangements, and program of activities that were best suited to their objectives and the political context surrounding their issues of focus. This flexibility in turn made the APGs progressively more attractive to parliamentarians and stakeholders as a tool for legislative activity on a broader range of issues, sparking further innovation.

Over time, APGs this expansion to a broader range of issues not only allowed APGs to be accepted as legitimate actors within the legislatures where they operated, but also to emerge as one of the standard tools for parliamentarians or external stakeholders wishing to take legislative action on a given issue. Rather than calculating the costs and benefits of creating new groups, APGs have become something that many lobbyists and parliamentarians feel should be established as part of a complete government relations package for a given subject – the presence of a group for a given subject indicating that it is being taken seriously within the political system.

Yet while accounting for the general increase in APG numbers, these factors do not explain the differences in group prevalence across jurisdictions. Instead, such variations to result primarily from the differing levels of partisan tensions in each political system, and the effectiveness of mechanisms for backbench input. Compared with the other three cases, the British parliament features the greatest number of APGs, the greatest level of backbench independence, and the least effective tools for backbench input into front bench decisions (Garner and Letki, 2005). In contrast, legislators in the two Canadian cases are much less willing to publicly defy their own parties, and also have comparatively effective opportunities for influencing policy decisions through the regular meetings of their respective intra-party caucuses. As such, on many issues backbench parliamentarians at Ottawa and Queen’s Park prefer to work through intra-party
caucuses rather than establish APGs. Moreover the groups that they establish are less likely to engage in overt policy advocacy.

The one partial exception to these variations between jurisdictions is the Scottish Parliament. In recent years, tensions between the parties at Holyrood, and especially between Labour and the Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP) have been as strong, if not stronger, than those among Canadian parties. Yet despite these tensions APGs have continued to flourish in the legislature as a legacy of the ideals of “new politics” on which the assembly was founded, and the expectation of external stakeholders, and especially civil society groups, to have regular access to MSPs. The scope of group activity, however, remains limited, with Scottish APGs serving more as stakeholder forums, and seldom taking on the kinds of overt policy advocacy seen at Westminster.

Overall, the recent growth in the number of APGs has improved the functioning of legislatures by increasing the information available to legislators, providing backbench parliamentarians with greater tools for policy advocacy, and expanding opportunities for external stakeholders to engage with their elected representatives. While such engagement comes with ethical risks, the dominance of charities and NGOs among those who engage with APGs suggests that the groups may actually help to enhance policy making given that corporate interests tend to have easier access to ministers and civil servants. However, such improvements in policy making can only occur if APGs operate in a transparent fashion by disclosing the support they receive, including in-kind support. Moreover, the reports produced by APGs are far too easily confused for formal documents produced by the parliament itself, enabling outside groups to “launder” their “asks” through the legitimacy of parliament.
CHAPTER 2

AN OVERVIEW OF THE APGS IN THE UK, SCOTLAND, CANADA, AND ONTARIO

1 Introduction

While sharing the same basic characteristics, the structure and functions of APGs can vary greatly both between jurisdictions and within them as well. For instance, while the average Scottish APG has 49 non-parliamentary members, the actual number in each group varies enormously from just one to 388. In contrast, no Canadian APG gives formal membership to non-parliamentarians. Yet while all Scottish APGs must hold elections for their executive officers, many Canadian APGs have self-appointed executives who simply declare themselves to be the leaders of a given group.

This chapter provides an overview of the APGs in the Canada, Ontario, Scotland and the UK, charting the growth in the number of groups in each jurisdiction and identifying the various subtypes of APGs that operate in each legislature. It also tracks the evolution of the regulations that govern APG activity and highlights the ethical concerns that have driven their expansion and toughening over time. This review illustrates the massive differences in the APG systems across the four cases. APGs are still just emerging at the Ontario Legislature, with just four groups in operation, most of which were formed within the past ten years. The Canadian Parliament’s system of APGs is largely unregulated, with only a small number of inter-country groups facing formal rules. At the other extreme, the UK currently has over 600 groups in operation and has created a rigorous transparency regime, with updates to its APG registry published every six weeks. The Scottish Parliament also stands out for having established a system of APG regulation within months of its first sitting, and for basing these regulations on the broader ideals of “new politics” on which the Parliament is founded.

At the same time such differences can hide substantial commonalities, including most notably the search for a balance between allowing APGs to benefit from external information and support while ensuring they do not become tools for inappropriate lobbying. A related problem is
the desire to impose regulations on APG behavior and transparency without turning them into formal aspects of the parliamentary system. As the British Parliament’s Standards Committee put it, “There is a longstanding dilemma about the regulation of [APGs]: they are essentially informal groupings, established by individual Members, yet the more restrictions and requirements that are placed on them, the more they appear to be endorsed by the House” (2013: 5). Common trends can also be found in the type of groups being formed. Although the total numbers are different, there is a surprising similarity in the issues addressed in each jurisdiction, with APGs on health related issues being the most numerous sub-type of subject group in the UK and Scotland, and the second most numerous in Canada.

However, before exploring the specificities of the APGs found in each case, this chapter first begins with an overview of the general characteristics of APGs that can be found across jurisdictions. It also clarifies a debate within the literature as to whether APGs should be considered alongside of intra-party caucuses and whether inter-country APGs should be seen as distinct from subject groups.

2 What is an APG?

APGs are organizations that are voluntarily formed by legislators from multiple parties who wish to pursue common interests on particular issues. The topics they address cover virtually all policy areas from A to Z, with APGs in the UK existing on subjects as diverse as Armenia, Beer, Cancer, Women in Enterprise, Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire, and Zoos and Aquariums. Though some have written constitutions, APGs are informal in that they have no official role in legislative processes (Hammond, 1998). In particular APGs operate independently from both parliamentary standing committees and intra-party caucuses. They also typically exclude cabinet members, making them independent from the executive as well. However, most APGs do have close relationships with outside actors who have an interest in the groups’ areas of focus. These outside bodies, which can include charities, non-governmental organizations, business associations, or embassies, often support APGs by organizing their meetings, keeping minutes and membership lists, conducting research, and managing group communications. Some also provide financial resources to cover the cost of refreshments at group events, travel by group members, or the expense of researching and publishing reports.
APGs are found in many national legislatures throughout the world, although they often go by different names. In the UK the vast majority are referred to as All Party Parliamentary Groups, or APPGs for short. In Scotland they are called Cross-Party Groups (CPGs). At the US Congress they are almost universally known as caucuses, while at the European Parliament they are Intergroups. The situation is more complicated in Canada, where inter-country APGs are usually referred to as either Parliamentary Friendship Groups, Parliamentary Associations, or Interparliamentary Groups. Subject groups, on the other hand, are typically known as either All Party Caucuses or Parliamentary Caucuses. This inconsistency in naming reflects the substantial differences between legislatures regarding the level of regulation and oversight to which APGs are subjected. For instance, the UK requires APGs to register their existence and regularly provide details of their officers, finances, and the contributions they receive from outside bodies. In contrast, the majority of the APGs at the Canadian Parliament are unregulated, allowing for a greater diversity of group structure and self-presentation.

Various APGs are active in each of the core functions performed by legislatures (representation, legislation, and scrutiny), and may at times even appear to function as extensions of the formal legislative committee system. In the area of representation, APGs often hold meetings or discussion forums to receive input from relevant stakeholder groups, and especially the partner organizations mentioned above. This information may also be summarized as briefings and forwarded to group members via email lists (Ringe et al., 2013). Such knowledge then informs politicians’ interventions into formal parliamentary forums. The very existence of an APG can also be seen to provide symbolic representation for individuals or organizations who identify with a given issue or subject. This can include those with certain medical conditions, businesses in a given industry, or immigrants from particular countries (Miler, 2011; Ringe et al., 2013). APGs may also contribute to symbolic representation by organizing events to mark particular occasions, such as national or religious holidays (e.g. Armenian independence day, Passover) or designated awareness days (e.g. World AIDS day).

In terms of scrutiny, the information that APG members receive from outside actors often prompts group members to investigate the performance of government policy in particular areas. Such scrutiny may occur through existing tools, such as parliamentary questions. However, some APGs also undertake their own committee-style inquiries. For instance, the APPG on Autism at the UK Parliament has issued a series of reports investigating the support offered to those with
the condition and recommending improvements (All Party Parliamentary Group on Autism, 2012). As for legislation, APGs may at times develop and introduce their own bills via the private members’ system. A case in point occurred when as 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). Groups may also attempt to sponsor amendments to government legislation (Ringe et al., 2013).

While a few APGs may undertake all of the activities described above, many are much less active or ambitious. Some groups do not engage in activities beyond information sharing, a choice that at times is deliberately made to ensure political neutrality and group unity in the face of partisan differences over policy choices (Ringe et al., 2013). Other groups are largely dormant, primarily existing in name only until an issue arises in their area of focus. Overall, few groups meet more than a handful of times per year, a limitation that reflects the intense time pressure faced by elected politicians and their staffs.

2.1 Definitional debates

Beyond these general characteristics, determining what exactly constitutes an APG can at times be somewhat challenging. APGs exist alongside a range of other bodies that may look and act in similar ways, or achieve similar outcomes. Different legislatures and researchers also employ varying definitions of APGs that reflect their own unique purposes and experiences. The most substantial points of debate are whether APGs should be examined in conjunction with intra-party caucuses, and whether inter-country APGs should be considered alongside of subject groups. The only two major studies on APGs that have been produced thus far are split on these questions, with Hammond (1998) including both intra-party caucuses and inter-country groups, while Ringe et al. (2013) exclude them.

2.1.1 Intra-party caucuses

Intra-party caucuses are similar to APGs, but are operated solely by legislators from the same political party. While this distinction at first appears clear, setting a dividing line can at times be challenging. In the US, congressional authorities refer to both intra-party caucuses and APGs as “congressional member organizations” (CMOs). Both are also covered by the same rules for
registration and financing, and some groups may move from one category to the other over time. A prime example is the *Congressional Hispanic Caucus*, which was originally bipartisan, but saw its Republican members leave and form a competing organization (the Congressional Hispanic Conference) after a falling out over American policy towards Cuba (Recio, 2013).

Intra-party caucuses can also resemble APGs in their relations with outside actors. For instance, the Canadian Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association supports separate intra-party automotive industry caucuses for each of Canada’s three major political parties (Burgess, 2013). Like APGs, intra-party caucuses can also be active in challenging the positions held by the government or their own parties. The oldest APG at the US Congress, the Democratic Study Group, was established by liberal Democrats to counter the influence of their more conservative-minded colleagues (Hammond, 1998). Likewise, the Liberal Party Women’s Caucus at the Canadian Parliament actively pressured the government of Liberal Prime Minister Paul Martin not to join the US ballistic missile defence program (Rana, 2005). Reflecting this ambiguity, all-party and intra-party caucuses are often examined together by researchers, as was the case in Hammond’s (1998) study of the Congressional caucus system.

While intra-party caucuses are interesting in their own right, this study focuses solely on APGs given that they play a substantially different role in the legislative process. Building on King (1976), Norton (2008) argues that intra-party caucuses focus primarily on pressuring party leaders to adopt certain policies. These groups can take the form of “tendencies,” which advocate on one specific issue, or “factions” which seek to advance a broader program. In contrast, all-party groups are characterized by parliamentarians working together across party lines as independent members of the legislature. While Norton’s writings are focused on parliamentary systems, similar arguments are made by Ringe et al. in their study of the US Congress. As they state, “single-party caucus organizations ultimately are important features of the legislative landscape in Congress, but they operate more like party factions than [APGs]” (2013: 100). Intra-party caucuses are therefore considered in this study only to the extent that their presence helps to explain variations in APG activity.

### 2.1.2 Inter-country APGs

Another significant debate within the literature is whether inter-country and issue-focused APGs should be considered together. Inter-country APGs serve to promote better relations between the
home country and other countries or regions of the world. In this way, they can be seen as part of
the broader phenomenon of “parliamentary diplomacy,” which Weisglas and de Boer define as
“full range of international activities undertaken by parliamentarians in order to increase mutual
understanding between countries, to assist each other in improving the control of governments
and the representation of a people and to increase the democratic legitimacy of inter-
governmental institutions” (2007: 93–94).

While included in Hammond’s (1998) study, Ringe et al. argue that such bodies do not meet their
standard for consideration because they are not “issue based” (2013: 222). This study takes
exception to the idea that APGs can be divided into subject groups that are “issue based” and
inter-country groups which are not, especially since the current era of globalization has greatly
expanded the realm of parliamentary diplomacy. As Weisglas and de Boer describe:

Although diplomacy has traditionally been an arena more or less exclusively
reserved to the executive, the increased blurring of boundaries between what is
national and what is foreign has led to a greater need for parliamentarians to
consider with a global mindset the issues put before them. Countless examples
spring to mind here, from transnational terrorism to border-neglecting pollution
issues… More and more issues that are put to parliament for consideration have
their origins in international developments or structures (2007: 94).

Reflecting this increased interdependence, many inter-country APGs now focus extensively on
policy issues. A prime example is the Canada-United States Interparliamentary Group, which
deals with vital questions of cross-border trade and security cooperation between the two
countries (Parliamentary Centre, 2003). A domestic focus can also be seen in the UK’s All-Party
Parliamentary Group on Africa, which conducted detailed research on the problem of corruption
and bribery by UK companies abroad, and has also made submissions to the UK government’s
National Strategic and Defence Security Review (Africa All Party Parliamentary Group, 2006,
2010). Conversely, many policy-focused groups, such as the Canadian All-Party Oceans Caucus
or the UK’s APPG on Human Trafficking, actually deal with a number of international issues.
The growth of APGs may therefore reflect an effort by parliamentarians to find new mechanisms
for exerting influence on policy issues in an era of globalization.

In addition to such policy work, many inter-country APGs also seek to build relationships with
immigrant communities. Politicians who participate in APGs for particular countries often have
substantial populations from those countries in their constituencies. For instance, Canadian MPs
from the city of Winnipeg, which has a large Filipino community, are very active in the *Canada-Philippines Parliamentary Group* (Raphael, 2009). Likewise, the *Canada-Portugal Parliamentary Friendship Group* was refounded by Andrew Cash, whose constituency includes the “Little Portugal” neighbourhood of Toronto. The establishment of inter-country APGs can also serve the broader political objectives of politicians and political parties. Several Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) indicated that the Scottish National Party’s (SNP) desire to give Scotland a greater international presence was partly behind the recent growth in the number of inter-country groups at the Scottish Parliament (confidential interviews, November and December 2012).

As these examples demonstrate, involvement in inter-country APGs can be just as instrumental for parliamentarians as participation in subject-focused groups. In addition, many of the politicians interviewed stressed that the travel undertaken by parliamentary friendship groups provided some of the best opportunities for building relationships and understanding between members of different parties. Given this potential for inter-country APGs to tackle policy questions, provide electoral benefits, and deepen cross-party understanding, such bodies are given equal status in this study alongside policy or issue-oriented groups. However, attention will be paid to whether there are different factors that attract politicians to inter-country versus subject groups.

The inclusion of inter-country groups leads to the further question of whether each legislature’s delegations to inter-parliamentary organizations should be considered as APGs. These bodies include the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), the Parliamentary Assembly of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO-PA), and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE-PA).

Weisglas and de Boer (2007) argue that inter-parliamentary organizations are important for parliamentarians as they allow for the continuation of legislative scrutiny in the international arena where governments have traditionally been able to operate without substantial oversight. However, the process for selecting who represents each legislature can vary greatly between jurisdictions. For instance, members of the British delegations to PACE, NATO-PA, and OSCE-PA are appointed after each general election in proportion to party strength and hold their
positions for the duration of a Parliament. In contrast, the inter-parliamentary delegations from the Canadian Parliament are each managed by separate parliamentarian-led APGs. The Parliament also makes no distinction between these APGs for inter-parliamentary organizations and those focused on bilateral relations, such as the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group or the Canada-China Legislative Association.

While accepting that parliamentarians participating in appointed delegations experience many of the same benefits, for the purposes of this study only those inter-parliamentary activities that are member controlled are considered to be APGs. Local chapters of inter-parliamentary organizations are also excluded the study if they are explicitly omitted from the rules for APGs in their home legislature. This includes the British and Scottish chapters of the CPA and the British chapter of the IPU. While each has elections for officers and operates independently from the party leaders, all three are managed separately from the systems governing APGs in their respective legislatures.

3 APGs in the UK

APGs are a long-established feature of the British Parliament, with the oldest, the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee, dating back to 1933. After a slow start, the number of groups rose sharply in the 1950s, and then again in the 1990s and 2000s, eventually hitting over 600 in 2014. This large number makes it difficult to speak about British APGs precisely: for every ten groups that conform to a trend, there is likely one that does not. Nevertheless, all groups still share many characteristics, in no small part thanks the rules to which all British APPGs must conform.

This section begins by plotting the expansion of UK APGs over time, focusing in particular on differences both between and within the broader inter-county and subject group types. Next it traces the development of the regulatory system for British APGs, highlighting the ongoing attempts to ensure transparency in group operations. The discussion then turns to two sub-types of APGs at Westminster: the “associate parliamentary groups” that allow external actors to be voting members, and the unregistered groups that operate outside of the Parliament’s regulations on APG activities. As the following discussion makes clear, the multiplicity of British APGs, combined with their long history and the detailed records available, makes the UK an ideal case for exploring the factors that have shaped APG growth over time.
3.1 APG growth at Westminster

Precursors to modern APGs have long existed at the UK Parliament. In the early 1800s, a group known as the “Clapham Sect” brought together MPs (including William Wilberforce) and external advocates who worked together to persuade Parliament to abolish the slave trade (confidential interview, November 2012). A similar campaign was mounted in the late 1800s for the introduction of the “Plimsoll line” to prevent the overloading of ships. Westminster has also been home to a number of bodies that are based on parliamentarians’ extra-parliamentary experience. Following the 1918 election, MPs who had been in the military established a “Service” committee at Parliament, which in 1922 evolved into the House of Commons Branch of the British Legion. However, while giving the Legion a foothold for parliamentary organizing, the group’s membership was limited only to those who had actually served (Wootton, 1963).

Figure 2.1 – Number APGs at the UK Parliament, 1948 – 2014

The first true subject-focused APG open to all parliamentarians was the Parliamentary Science Committee, which was established in 1933 to facilitate interactions between parliamentarians and

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a number of scientific associations. The hope was that a single committee could have greater influence on government policy than each association would achieve working independently (Walkland, 1964). By 1938 its membership included 14 MPs, three Peers, and 26 scientific associations. During the 1930s the committee worked to develop common positions on legislation and to raise questions on the government’s science policy. It also developed a regular publication – which continues to this day – called *Science in Parliament* that reviewed parliamentary proceedings which touched on scientific matters (Walkland, 1964). After the outbreak of World War II, the group was refounded with its current name, the *Parliamentary and Scientific Committee*, and its emphasis changed to the role of technology in the war effort. Once hostilities ended, it resumed its broader advocacy around government support for science and the use of scientific insights for the development of government policy. The first inter-country APG at Westminster, the *British-American Parliamentary Group* (BAPG), was founded in 1937 in the lead up to the Second World War (BAPG n.d.).

Figure 2.1 tracks the number of APGs in operation at the British Parliament since 1948, the first year for which a full count of the number of groups is available. Group creation was stagnant in the first ten years after the war, but increased sharply by the end of the 1950s, with the total number of groups rising from nine to 146 between 1956 and 1975 (Morgan, 1979). APG growth slowed in the following decades, but then jumped again following the Labour victory in 1997, with the number in operation soaring from 242 to 443 in 2005 and 592 in 2010. The increase in the total number of groups then slowed drastically during the coalition period from 2010 to 2015. However, as is shown in Chapter Six, this decline did not reflect a drop in the pace of group creation, but rather the unusually large number of APGs that did not re-register after the election – which itself was a product of the large turnover of MPs.

Rather than following the same general trend, the numbers of inter-country and subject APGs in the UK have grown at very different rates. Inter-country APGs outnumbered subject groups from the 1960s until the 1980s, at which point subject group creation accelerated dramatically while inter-country groups stagnated. Moreover, while subject groups have grown continuously since the 1940s, the number of inter-country APGs has gone through periods of growth and decline.

In addition to differences in the growth rates *between* inter-country and subject groups overall, there have also been substantial differences between the various subtypes *within* each category as
well. Figure 2.2 shows the number of inter-country APGs by region of the world in 1996 and 2014. APGs dealing with Asia and the Pacific, Africa, and UK territories saw the fastest growth in recent years. However, the different number of countries in each continent means that focusing on the number of groups alone can misrepresent the level of interest in a particular region, with coverage being more comprehensive for those continents that are of greater strategic interest to the United Kingdom. For instance, there is an inter-country group for nearly every state in Europe and the Middle East, with only a few of the smallest countries absent (e.g. Andorra, Montenegro, Yemen). In contrast, Sub-Saharan Africa fares much worse, with just 21 groups (including the overall APPG for Africa) for its 49 countries.

Figure 2.2 – Growth of inter-country APGs in the UK by area of focus, 1996 and 2014

Figure 2.3 displays number of subject APGs by policy or issue area in 1996 and 2014. While most categories employed in the figure are largely self-evident, some may require explanation. “Regional” APGs either focus on the well-being of a specific region of the UK, such as the APPG for Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire, or deal with a policy issue within a given region, such as the APPG for Rail in Wales. “Conscience” APGs are those that campaign on a particular subject based on an ethical belief, such as the APPGs on Animal Welfare, Choice at the End of Life, the Death Penalty, and the Pro-Life Group. APGs for “current events” are those that help parliamentarians participate in the planning for major upcoming events, such as the APPGs for the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee, or the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games.
However, groups for current events can also allow politicians to coordinate their response to a specific problem that is affecting a number of people across the country. Two such groups in operation during the period of this research were the APPG for Justice for Equitable Life Policy Holders and the APPG in Support of Visteon Pensioners. Finally, “Parliamentary Clubs” are
APGs that exist for parliamentarians who wish to engage in a given pastime together. Current examples include the APPG for Tennis, the Parliament Choir, and the Lords and Commons Cricket Club.

APPGs for health issues have seen by far the most growth, with the number in operation nearly quadrupling from 21 to 78. Much of this increase stems from the proliferation of groups focusing on ever more specific health conditions. There is now a broad APPG on Health, a general APPG on Cancer, and separate APPGs on Brain Tumours, Breast Cancer, Pancreatic Cancer, and Ovarian Cancer. A large number of groups have also formed to deal with different aspects of the health system, such as the APPGs on Hospice and Palliative Care, Surgical Services, Primary and Public Care, and Telehealth. Such increased specialization can be found in other policy fields as well. While there are still bodies for broad economic sectors like the APPG for Manufacturing or the APPG for Communications, groups have also emerged for a range of specific industries, such as the APPGs for Aerospace, Bingo, Cleaning and Hygiene, Social Tourism, and Wood Panelling. In the area of arts and culture, the concerns of UK musicians are now represented not only by the long-established APPG for Music, but also the more recently formed APPGs for Brass Bands, Classical Music, Folk Arts, and Jazz Appreciation. The flip side of this increase in specialization is that there is now considerable overlap between many APGs in the same each area.

3.2 Ethical concerns and regulatory evolution

The UK possesses perhaps the world’s most comprehensive system for regulating and monitoring APGs. These regulations have been repeatedly strengthened over time in response to recurrent concerns that APGs are being used as tools for inappropriate lobbying. As a result, the parliamentary authorities regularly publish an increasingly detailed set of records about each group, making it possible to track not only group growth over time, but also participation by parliamentarians and external stakeholders.
Prior to 1984 the British Parliament had no regulations specifically governing the operation of APGs, and no compulsory mechanism existed to track which groups were in operation. That year a report by the House of Commons (Services) Committee raised alarm at the involvement of non-parliamentarians in APG activities, and well as the pressure that the growing number of groups was placing on meeting rooms (Kelly and Yousaf, 2014). The report resulted in the creation of the “Approved List” of APGs, which identified those that met certain basic criteria for transparency. To give groups an incentive to conform, only approved APGs were allowed to refer to themselves as “All-Party Groups” or to advertise their meetings on the “All-Party Whip,” which is the weekly notice of upcoming APG meetings (United Kingdom. House of Commons, 2005a). They also received priority for room bookings over unapproved groups.

Despite these changes, concerns over the external support received by APGs emerged again the following year as part of a broader inquiry by the Select Committee on Members’ Interests into lobbying activity at Parliament (Doig, 1986a; Kelly and Yousaf, 2014). Yet rather than expanding the existing Approved List, the House of Commons instead created a separate “Registry of All-Party Groups.” Registration was compulsory, with APGs required to provide the names of their officers, a list of any benefits provided by outside organizations (either financial or in-kind), and whether any staff employed by a group had other employment that might create a conflict of interest (Kelly and Yousaf, 2014). Groups receiving support via a lobby firm were also supposed to identify the “ultimate client” on whose behalf it was provided. In addition, a new distinction was created between “all party groups” that limited their membership to MPs and Peers, and “registered groups” that met the criteria for registration, but also offered membership to non-parliamentarians. These categories were eventually renamed “all-party parliamentary groups” and “associate parliamentary groups,” respectively. APGs were also required to identify themselves as “subject groups” or “country groups.” Despite technically being two separate systems, the new Registry of All-Party Groups and the older Approved List were managed together, with little distinction made in practice. The documents were not available to the public, and were instead kept in the Commons Library.

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8 Prior to the creation of the registry the Parliament did prepare regular “Factsheets” listing which groups were in operation. However, the list relied on the voluntary disclosure of information from the groups themselves.

9 For instance, the Commons’ 1985 Factsheet on All-Party Subject Groups simply placed the acronym “APG” beside the names of those groups that were both registered and on the approved list, while those that were just
In 1988 the Commons again responded to worries over APGs accountability by toughening the criteria for the Approved List. Inclusion was further restricted to those APGs that were open to members of both Houses, held annual elections for officers, and provided adequate notice for meetings. Groups were also required to meet a minimum threshold for all party support, with each needing to have at least 10 “qualifying members,” including five from the governing party and five from the opposition, of which at least three needed to be from the official opposition (United Kingdom. House of Commons. Public Information Office, 1996).

Even with these tougher measures, concerns over the link between lobbying and APGs continued to fester (Kelly and Yousaf, 2014). In 1998 the registry was made publicly available, and 2000 it was placed online. The number of qualifying members required was also expanded from 10 to 20, with half still needing to come from each of the government and the opposition, including six from the main opposition party (United Kingdom. House of Commons, 2005a). However, the disclosure requirements were reduced so that APGs only needed to record financial benefits from a given source if they totalled £1,000 or more in a single year.

Public anxieties over APGs emerged once again in 2006 when a study by The Times found that six of the APGs that had received support from lobbying firms had failed to declare the ultimate source of the support (Coates, 2006). An investigation into the allegations and the broader rules for APGs by Sir Philip Mawer, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, validated many of the concerns over outside influence and the lack of accountability in APG operations, prompting him to recommend a series of changes (Kelly and Yousaf, 2014). These included compelling lobby firms, charities, and not-for-profits who provide “assistance” to APGs to release a list of any clients or donors who would have a material interest in the subject of a group; requiring any reports produced by APGs to include the names of the external organizations that support the group; and requiring APGs to ensure that their reports are not confused with those from formal parliamentary committees (Kelly and Yousaf, 2014).

registered received only an “RG” for “Registered Group” (United Kingdom. House of Commons. Public Information Office, 1985b).
The Commons’ Committee on Standards and Privileges held consultations based on Sir Philip’s recommendations and issued a further report in 2009 (Kelly and Yousaf, 2014). While accepting many of the proposals, it did not endorse the idea that external stakeholders should have to disclose their clients or donors on the APG registry, instead recommending that such disclosure should only be made upon request, and should apply solely to those organizations that provided an APG’s secretariat (United Kingdom. House of Commons. Committee on Standards and Privileges, 2009). The Committee also recommend reducing the confusion around the APG system by merging the Approved List and the Registry.

The House finally adopted the recommendations from the Standards and Privileges Committee in February 2011 (Kelly and Yousaf, 2014). Yet just weeks after adopting the new guidelines, a study of the APG registry by The Guardian raised further alarm about outside influence on APGs, finding that groups were receiving over £1.6 million per year from external actors (Ball, 2011). In late 2011 the Speakers of the Commons and the Lords established a Joint Working Group to examine the funding and operation of APGs (United Kingdom. Parliament, 2011b). The working group, which was chaired by former Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, sought submissions from interested parties and also conducted a survey of MPs and Peers. The results again underscored concerns over the connection between APGs and lobbying activity, with 48 percent of the parliamentarians who responded agreeing with the statement that “APPGs are prone to be manipulated by public affairs and lobby groups for their own purposes” (Straw et al., 2012). Just 25 percent disagreed.

The Working Group reported in June 2012 and suggested a range of reforms, including:

- Eliminating the category of “Associate Parliamentary Group”;
- Requiring all groups receiving more than £3,300 in support to prepare a full financial statement;
- Lowering the threshold for the disclosure of financial support to £660, the same used for MPs’ financial interests;
- Banning APGs from using the parliamentary logo (the portcullis) on their reports, communications, and websites;
- Requiring any report published by an APG to include a disclaimer clearly stating that it is not an official parliamentary publication;
- Forcing any APG staff who receive a parliamentary pass to disclose any paid employment, or any gift that relates to their work in parliament if either is more 0.5% of an MP’s salary (£329 in 2011) (Straw et al., 2012).
The report was referred to the House of Commons Committee on Standards for further study. During this period, the issue of lobbying and APGs remained in the headlines thanks to a series of undercover stings by reporters. In one case, journalists posing as lobbyists for the government of Fiji recorded MP Patrick Mercer agreeing to accept payment in return for establishing an APG on the country (Hope, 2014). In separate cases, two Peers were also recorded agreeing to create an APG for a South Korean solar energy firm in return for cash (Brant, 2013). All three were eventually found guilty of breaching standards and suspended from Parliament.

The Standards Committee accepted most of the working group’s suggestions, although several were watered down. It rejected an outright ban on the use of the portcullis by APGs, instead calling for the development of a special “APPG branded” version of the logo that would distinguish APG reports from those of formal parliamentary committees (2013). It also disagreed with the call for lower disclosure thresholds, arguing that only contributions £1,500 or more in a given year from a single source should be registered, and that APGs should only have to prepare full financial statements if they received more than £12,500 a year from all sources combined. More surprising though was the Standards Committee’s recommendation to eliminate the requirement for qualifying members. The Speakers’ Working Group had flagged the issue, noting that many parliamentarians were qualifying members for far more APGs than they could reasonably be involved in, thereby eroding the accountability such members were supposed to offer (Straw et al., 2012). The Standards Committee argued that the creation of qualifying members had failed to accomplish its intended purpose of limiting group growth and ensuring active participation by members. In their place, the committee recommended doubling the minimum number of group officers from two to four. It also proposed that external actors providing in-kind services should be required to estimate the value of their contributions.

The Commons approved the Standards Committee’s recommendations in May 2014, with most of the new rules taking effect after the 2015 election (Barron, 2014). Despite these changes, however, many observers remained worried that the system was still too open to abuse. One MP even warned that corporate funding of APGs was “the next big scandal waiting to happen” (Graham Allen, quoted in Gallagher, 2014).
3.3 “Associate” parliamentary groups

As noted above, “associate parliamentary groups” were those British APGs that allowed non-parliamentarians to participate as voting members. While the associate category was eliminated in 2014, it is discussed here given that it existed for the period studied. The groups’ intimate ties with outside actors also make them essential to any exploration of the role that APGs play in facilitating interactions between parliamentarians and external stakeholders.

Table 2.1 presents the number of associate groups and all-party parliamentary groups from 1996 until 2014. Associate groups were almost exclusively subject focused, with just a handful falling into the inter-country category. The number of associate groups declined steadily over the study period, falling from over 25 per cent of all APGs in 1996 to under three per cent by 2014. This drop was initially only in proportionate terms given that the number of APPGs more than doubled from 1996 to 2005. However, the absolute number of associate groups fell dramatically after the 2010 election once it became clear that they were being closely examined over ethical concerns regarding their relationship with external actors.

Table 2.1 – Number of associate versus all-party parliamentary groups at the British Parliament, 1996-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>1996</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Associate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-country</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPG</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-country</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>473</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While few in number, several of the most influential and active APGs at Westminster once operated as associate groups, including the Associate Parliamentary Group on Health, the Associate Parliamentary Manufacturing Group, the Parliamentary Advisory Council on Transport Safety, and the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee. Many of these groups functioned as broad forums that facilitated dialogue between parliamentarians and stakeholders from particular industries. Partly as a result, they also tended to be disproportionately well resourced compared to APPGs. For instance, all but two of the 33 associate groups registered in
September 2012 reported some form external assistance. Though most reported only in-kind support, 10 groups received financial contributions worth a combined £458,669. By contrast, external support was reported by just two-thirds of the 551 APPGs operating at that time. Of these, just 46 declared cash contributions for a combined total of £1,364,817. APPGs were therefore less likely to receive external support than associate groups, and when they did it was typically less extensive. This combination of substantial financing and a formal role for external participants is what ultimately led to calls for the category’s elimination.

### 3.4 Unregistered all-party groups

Despite the benefits offered to registered groups, some British APGs continue to operate outside of the formal system. It is not possible to identify how many of these groups exist, but Table 2.2 lists those identified during the study. While performing many of the same functions as their registered counterparts, unregistered groups do not abide by the parliamentary rules for APG disclosure and transparency. They generally give external stakeholders a larger say in group operations, with all but one receiving at least some form of external support. There is also huge variation in participation by parliamentarians among unregistered APGs, with some claiming dozens of members, while others appear to have none beyond their chairs.

Although the number of unregistered APGs appears small, studying their operations can yield useful insights. In particular, their presence underlines the difficulties faced by regulators: if the requirements for registration become too onerous, APGs may choose to forgo the associated benefits and remain informal. With their lack of uniform structure, the UK’s unregistered APGs also closely resemble the all-party groups in operation at the Canadian Parliament and Ontario legislature, allowing for a more thorough comparison between the jurisdictions.

The activities of the unregistered APGs also reveals why some groups choose not to register. A case in point is the *Cross-Party Inquiry into Unplanned Pregnancy*, which was conducted by three MPs (one from each major party) along with three external representatives from the charity 2020health (Rudd et al., 2013). This closed structure was deliberately chosen so that the MPs could examine the rise unwanted pregnancies in the UK while preventing participation by other parliamentarians opposed to the provision of abortion services (Martinson, 2012). Three other groups, the *Cross-Party Group on Overseas Voters*, the *Cross-Party Inquiry into Unplanned Pregnancy*, and the *Independent Parliamentary Inquiry into Online Child Protection*, appear not
to have registered because they existed only to conducted one-time studies on specific policy issues. As the members of the last group wrote in their report, “Rather than create a new All Party Parliamentary Group, which can often outlast its original campaigning purpose, the team decided to set up a one-off Inquiry to review the issue of online child protection” (2012: 9).

Table 2.2 – Unregistered APGs at the British Parliament

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unregistered APG</th>
<th>Secretariat provider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carbon Connect</td>
<td>Policy Connect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic Pain Policy Coalition</td>
<td>Policy Connect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-Party Group on Overseas Voters</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-Party Inquiry into Unplanned Pregnancy</td>
<td>2020health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes in BME Communities Working Group</td>
<td>Insight Consulting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Policy Alliance</td>
<td>In-house staff10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Court Unions’ Parliamentary Group</td>
<td>National Association of Probation Officers (NAPO), PCS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education Commission</td>
<td>Policy Connect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Parliamentary Inquiry into Online Child Protection</td>
<td>Premier Christian Media; Safermedia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice Unions’ Parliamentary Group</td>
<td>NAPO, PCS, Prison Officers Association, Police Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melanoma Taskforce</td>
<td>Insight Consulting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public &amp; Commercial Services (PCS) Union Parliamentary Group</td>
<td>PCS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary and Stakeholder Diabetes Think Tank</td>
<td>Insight Consulting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills Commission</td>
<td>Policy Connect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westminster Sustainable Business Forum</td>
<td>Policy Connect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, the majority of unregistered APGs located are longer-term bodies with stable funding and enduring relations with external partners. For instance, the Digital Policy Alliance was created in 1993 to provide research on information technology policy. Its external partners include several major corporations like CGI, Cisco, IBM, and Microsoft, as well as a number of trade bodies, such as the Society of Information Technology Management and the Remote

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10 The Digital Policy Alliance receives funding from external sponsors, enabling it to hire its own secretariat.
Gambling Association. It also claims participation from 62 MPs, 47 Peers, and 3 MEPs (Digital Policy Alliance, n.d.). The Alliance produces regular policy briefings and also hosts meetings at Westminster, at time in conjunction with formal APGs.

Except for the Digital Policy Alliance, which has its own in-house administration, all of the other longer-term unregistered APGs encountered were supported by one of three organizations: Policy Connect (a not-for-profit),\(^{11}\) the lobby firm Insight Consulting Group, or the Public and Commercial Services (PCS) Union (either on its own or in partnership with other unions). This repeated creation of unregistered APGs by the same secretariat sponsors suggests they are an effective way for outside organizations to connect with parliamentarians on highly specialized issues.

The ad-hoc structure of unregistered APGs raises serious questions about transparency. Minutes of a meeting of the Melanoma Taskforce in November 2012 were branded with the official parliamentary logo (the portcullis), even though just one of the 20 attendees was a parliamentarian (Siân James MP) and the rest were representatives from charities, professional associations, health facilities, and pharmaceutical firms (The Melanoma Taskforce, 2012). While the meeting itself may not be cause for alarm, the Taskforce’s website boasts that the government eventually adopted 17 of the 20 recommendations in its “2015 Skin Cancer Visions” report, indicating that it does have some policy influence (The Melanoma Taskforce, 2015). Concerns were also raised about the objectivity of the Independent Parliamentary Inquiry into Online Child Protection – and particularly its recommendation that households should have to opt-in to receiving online pornography – given that the report was supported by Premier Christian Media, which operates Christian radio stations and magazines, as well as the Christian-inspired charity Safermedia (Collins, 2013).

### 4 APGs in Scotland

In contrast to the UK or Canada, where APGs evolved organically over time, the presence of APGs at the Scottish Parliament was largely planned. APGs were well established in at Westminster during the lead up to the Parliament’s creation in 1999, and the cooperative nature

\(^{11}\) Policy Connect, which is discussed further in the next chapter, was founded by MP Barry Sheerman for the purpose of bringing together politicians and stakeholders to discuss policy issues.
of APGs was seen to be keeping with the consensus-focused principles of “new politics” that
guided the design of the Parliament’s structures and rules of operation. APGs began forming
rapidly after the first elections, and the Parliament established provisions to govern them within
six months of beginning operations (Scotland. Parliament. Standards Committee, 1999a).

This early adoption of a comprehensive regime to register and regulate APGs means that their
growth and MSPs’ engagement with them can be tracked over the Parliament’s entire life span.
However, the incorporation of the ideals of new politics also means that Scotland’s APGs
operate differently than those in other jurisdictions. In particular, groups tend to have
participation from a large number of external actors, not just those providing their secretariats.

4.1 APG growth in Scotland

APGs began to form at the Scottish Parliament even before the regulations governing their
operations were passed. By the end of the first session in 2003, nearly 50 groups been
established. As shown in Figure 1.3 in the previous chapter, the number of groups has continued
to grow with each session, reaching 88 by June 2015. As in the UK, the growth rate for subject
APGs in Scotland has slowed somewhat in recent years, with just 10 new groups created in the
Parliament’s fourth session.

In contrast, the growth rate for inter-country groups has actually increased in each session. Just
two inter-country CPGs, those for Cuba and Palestine, were in operation by the end of the first
session in 2003 and just two others, the CPGs Tibet and Malawi, formed in the second session.12
Rather than promoting stronger trade or diplomatic relations, these groups focused more on
building international solidarity. It was only after the SNP formed government in 2007 that inter-
country groups emerged that not only pursued international solidarity, but also a more
realpolitikal agenda of improved economic links. This trend continued after the SNP won a
majority in 2011, with APGs now operating for major world powers such as China, Germany,
France, Japan, and Russia, as well as emerging economies like Turkey. Inter-country APGs
accounted for over half of the new groups created in the Parliament’s fourth session. Figure 2.4
presents the number of inter-country groups by region in 2003 and 2015.

12 Scots were heavily involved in the colonization of Malawi and Scottish civil society has remained active in the
country. The Scottish Government has operated a development program in Malawi since 2005 (Anyimadu, 2011).
Figure 2.5 displays the number of subject groups at the Scottish Parliament by policy issue in 2003 and 2015. In keeping with the UK and Canada, health and industry focused groups are the most prevalent, and have been since the first session of the Parliament. However, significant changes can be seen in the smaller categories. APGs dealing with arts and heritage topics, such as the CPG on the Scottish Contemporary Music Industry, made up the third largest category in 2003, but by 2015 their numbers had fallen. In contrast, groups dealing with social affairs issues, like the CPG on Older People, Age and Ageing, experienced substantial growth and moved into third place.

Figure 2.4 – Growth of inter-country APGs in Scotland by region, 2003 – 2015

Many APGs at Holyrood, such as the CPGs on Cancer, Palliative Care, Scotch Whisky, and Video Games have direct equivalents at Westminster, and involve some of the same stakeholder groups. Others, such as those for Chronic Pain, Co-operatives, Fair Trade, and Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis, are unique to Scotland and appear to reflect differences in concerns and civil society mobilization between the two jurisdictions. Despite the relatively small number of groups, overlap among APGs is still evident at Holyrood. For instance, the Parliament is home to

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13 The last registry of Scottish APGs that could be found prior to the May 2011 election was from December 2010. The 2015 data are from June of that year.
both a general group on *Disability* and separate groups on *Deafness, Dyslexia,* and *Visual Impairment.*

**Figure 2.5 – Growth of subject APGs in Scotland by area of focus, 2003 – 2015**

4.2 New politics and Scottish APGs

Following the devolution referendum in 1997, a Consultative Steering Group on the Scottish Parliament was appointed to develop draft standing orders and rules of procedure for the new legislature. The Group, which included politicians, academics, and leading figures from civil

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14 The last registry of Scottish APGs that could be found prior to the 2003 election was from April 2003. The 2015 data was from June of that year.
society, developed four principles to guide their recommendations and the overall character of the Parliament:

- the Scottish Parliament should embody and reflect the sharing of power between the people of Scotland, the legislators and the Scottish Executive;
- the Scottish Executive should be accountable to the Scottish Parliament and the Parliament and Executive should be accountable to the people of Scotland;
- the Scottish Parliament should be accessible, open, responsive, and develop procedures which make possible a participative approach to the development, consideration and scrutiny of policy and legislation;
- the Scottish Parliament in its operation and its appointments should recognise the need to promote equal opportunities for all (1998: 6).

These principles were seen to embody a “new politics” that would be more inclusive and deliberative than that practiced at Westminster (Arter, 2004).

The Steering Group’s report did not mention APGs, but their ability to connect parliamentarians and outside stakeholders led to their easy acceptance as part of the broader idea of new politics. When the Parliament’s Standards Committee began debating how to regulate cross-party groups, MSPs sought to ensure that they did not serve to provide certain groups with privileged access to parliamentarians. Indeed the first member to speak on the proposed rules, Labour MSP Des McNulty, expressed a desire to break with the existing state of affairs at Westminster:

Many of the [proposed] regulations appear to be derived from the Westminster model and from Westminster practice. Westminster attracts to itself a notion of its own centrality and salience, and there are all kinds of all-party groups that provide ways in which people can exercise influence within a setting where the Parliament itself is relatively inaccessible. If our Scottish Parliament is going to be different, we must be careful about the basis on which we establish all-party groups. We do not want them to be a mechanism for any particular external or externally led group to have what might be seen to be privileged access to the institution of Parliament (Scotland. Parliament. Standards Committee, 1999b).

In the end, the committee diverged from Westminster practice in several ways. The rules adopted, which are now contained in the Code of Conduct for MSPs, permit non-MSPs to be group members, and even to hold lower-level executive posts such as group secretary. This external membership extends not only to those participating as individuals, but also to those representing institutions, such as corporations, government departments, non-governmental organizations, or foreign governments. Thus all of the APGs at the Scottish Parliament operate in
a similar fashion to the former associate parliamentary groups at Westminster, with the important exception that external members of the APGs at Holyrood can actually hold executive posts. There are no limits on the number of outside members that an APG can have, although the rules stipulate that “the overall membership profile of the Group must be clearly Parliamentary in character” (Scotland. Parliament. Standards Committee, 1999a). At least two MSPs who are members of the group also must be present at any meetings “To maintain and guarantee the Parliamentary nature of the occasion.”

Unlike Westminster, where APGs meetings are often held in private and are announced only on the internal All-Party Whip, the Standards Committee chose to require Scottish APGs to hold their meetings “in public” and to announce them at least one week in advance on the Parliamentary website. Groups were also required to report all contributions or benefits received from a single source that totalled £250 or more within a given calendar year. This included services provided both directly or in-kind and specifically included travel.

The Parliament’s rules for APGs also broke with those in Canada and the UK by making no distinction between inter-country and subject-focused groups. Given Holyrood’s lack power over foreign affairs, it may have been assumed that no inter-country groups would form and the issue was not discussed in the committee hearings on the original regulations. Scottish APGs also must meet a higher threshold for cross-party support than their Westminster counterparts. To register, APGs require minimum of five MSP members, including at least one from each party that is represented in the Parliamentary Bureau (i.e. those with at least five elected MSPs). However, individual APGs can apply for an exemption in certain circumstances. In the Parliament’s first session, such dispensation was provided to the CPGs on Nuclear Disarmament and Palestine, neither of which could find a Conservative member (Scotland. Parliament. Standards Committee, 2003). Each group also needs two MSPs to serve as officers, one of whom must be the convener.

The final distinction between the APGs systems at Westminster and Holyrood is that would-be groups in the latter must apply for registration. New groups at Westminster must register to gain access to the full range of benefits offered to APGs, but approval is automatic once groups demonstrate that they have met the required standards. By comparison, new APGs in Scotland must not only meet the registration criteria, but also receive approval from the Parliament’s Standards Committee. In practice approval is typically granted with little debate, and no
examples were found of applications being refused. Nevertheless, such scrutiny may discourage
the creation of groups that would exist in name only, or serve as thinly veiled fronts for lobbying
activity.

The members of the Standards Committee had high expectations for the new regime, and hoped
that it would correct the problems they observed with the APGs at Westminster. As Mr. McNulty
observed upon the approval of the original regulations, “the system that we have put in place is
innovative. The Scottish cross-party groups will have a considerable impact on the broadening
democracy agenda in Scotland. They are more open and more participative in intention – and, I
hope, in actuality – than their equivalents at Westminster” (Scotland. Parliament. Standards
Committee, 1999c).

4.3 Ethical concerns and regulatory evolution

Despite this seemingly robust system of regulation, the MSPs on the Standards Committee soon
expressed concerns that outside lobbyists were using the new APGs primarily as tools for
lobbying (Scotland. Parliament. Standards Committee, 2002a). There were also reports of groups
meeting with just one MSP present instead of the two necessary for quorum, and complaints
about outside lobbyists approaching MSPs to create new bodies so they could have better access
to the Parliament.

In May 2002, the Standards Committee agreed launch a comprehensive evaluation of the APG
system to begin the following month. On the day in June that the committee launched its review,
two media reports raised concerns over the large amount of funding received by certain groups
(Peterkin, 2002; Scott, 2002). The articles particularly focused on the £12,425, mostly from
pharmaceutical companies, received by the *CPG on Cancer* for its “Scotland Against Cancer”
conference, and the £15,000 given to the *CPG on Palestine* by the United Arab League. Several
large donations from charities were noted as well, such as the nearly £14,000 given by Action on
Smoking and Health Scotland to the *CPG on Tobacco Control* (Peterkin, 2002).

The committee’s review continued over the following months, but in November 2002 it decided
to commission external research in hopes of finding a way to evaluate the groups’ effectiveness
and operations (Scotland. Parliament. Standards Committee, 2002b). This decision further
delayed the process, with the findings of the research only being presented in June 2004 – long
after the May 2003 election and two full years after the review began (Scotland. Parliament. Standards Committee, 2004). Even then, no rule changes were adopted.

Concerns over the APGs at Holyrood surfaced again in January 2006 when the *Sunday Herald* published allegations that the *CPG on Civil Nuclear Energy* had failed to disclose the support it received from nuclear operator British Energy, which provided the group’s secretariat and had also covered travel costs for a visit to the company’s facility at Torness and for a dinner with the equivalent APG at Westminster (Hutcheon, 2006b). A few months later, another *Sunday Herald* article revealed that MSP Alasdair Morrison had founded the *CPG on Golf* at the same time that his brother’s lobby firm was providing services to the Scottish Golf Union, which served as the group’s secretariat (Hutcheon, 2006a). The potential conflict of interest was never disclosed.

It was not until May 2007 that the rules for cross-party groups were updated as part of the broader revision of the *Code of Conduct for MSPs* (Scotland. Parliament, 2007). In an effort to reduce confusion with formal parliamentary activities, APGs were banned from using the Parliament’s logo on their publications. They were also required to publish an “Annual Return” that included a financial statement, a list of all donations or in-kind assistance valued at £250 or more, and a list of all meetings held. However, in 2009 the disclosure threshold was raised to contributions valued at £500 or more (Scotland. Parliament, 2009).

In January 2012, the Standards Committee (now named the Standards, Procedure and Public Appointments Committee) launched another extensive review of the cross-party group system. As part of the process it sent a consultation document to all of the organizations engaged with APGs, receiving 40 submissions. It also held evidence sessions with participating individuals, organizations, MSPs, and experts (Scotland. Parliament. Committee on Standards, Procedures, and Public Appointments, 2012: 2). The resulting report highlighted APGs’ positive contributions to the Parliament, but raised several concerns, including the lack of clarity as to the purpose of the groups, the growth in their numbers, the low levels of MSP attendance meetings, and the lack of transparency in their operations. (Scotland. Parliament. Committee on Standards, Procedures, and Public Appointments, 2012). In response it recommended major changes to the rules, beginning with the establishment of a clear statement of the purpose of APG activity at the Parliament:
Cross-Party Groups provide an opportunity for MSPs from across the parties to engage with external stakeholders, primarily to enable the sharing of experiences and information on a particular subject and raising awareness of issues relevant to MSPs’ parliamentary duties… Cross-Party Groups are formed and led by MSPs, although it is expected that groups will also have non-MSP members, whether individuals or representatives of organisations (2012: 3–4 emphasis added).

Though the statement of purpose makes it clear that non-parliamentarians would continue to be active in APGs, the committee recommended the creation of separate “individual” and “organizational” memberships so that groups could track who participated on their own initiative, and who actually represented organizations or corporations. To guard against “backdoor” lobbying, it also called for the adoption of Westminster’s rules on the disclosure of the external support received by secretariat organizations themselves. Under these measures, any charities or not-for-profits serving as the secretariat to an APG would, upon request, need to disclose a list of all contributions over £5,000 received in the past year. Any public affairs company would need to disclose its full client list. While the number of MSPs required for quorum was kept at two, the committee also recommended that groups should post minutes of their meetings online so that the public could better track who attended each meeting and what was discussed.

The committee’s recommendations were adopted in the revised Code of Conduct for MSPs published in January 2013, but did little to end concerns about the use of APGs for lobbying. A review of APG activity published by the Scotsman newspaper just prior to the adoption of the new Code found that only nine of the APGs in operation had actually completed their required annual return (Barnes, 2013b). While there was no indication of deliberate wrongdoing, the lack of transparency caused “anxiety” by making it impossible to see which external organizations had given support (Barnes, 2013a). The following year The Herald reported that the charity Pain Concern had previously received a grant from medical products company Meditronics to provide refreshments at meetings of the CPG on Chronic Pain, creating confusion regarding the source of the funds (Hutcheon, 2014b). The same day the paper further revealed that the charity Rare Disease UK, which served as the secretariat for the CPG on Rare Diseases, had received over £50,000 from various actors in the pharmaceutical industry raising questions about its neutrality (Hutcheon, 2014c).
Similar concerns over covert lobbying also emerged when David Miller, a professor at Bath University studying corporate lobbying, wrote to the Standards Committee to raise concerns regarding lobbyist Jacquie Forde, who served as the secretariat to the CPGs on *Health Inequalities* and *Chronic Pain* (Miller, 2014). Miller noted that while Forde claimed to offer her services on a voluntary basis, two not-for-profit companies that she had founded (the Health Inequalities Alliance and the Wellbeing Alliance) both had provided financial contributions to the APGs for refreshments, leading him to argue that her involvement was part of her work. Miller also expressed concerns that Forde was actively engaged in lobbying for pharmaceutical companies and so could not be seen as an independent contributor. Although the allegations against Forde were picked up in the media (see for instance Hutcheon, 2014a) she received staunch supported by the convenors of the two cross-party groups (Baillie, 2014; Chisholm, 2014). However, an investigation by the Standards Committee upheld the complaint on the grounds that since the Wellbeing Alliance was listed as a member of both groups, Forde could not claim to be acting voluntarily. She therefore either had to declare the value of her work on the secretariat to the two groups, or register as an individual member. Forde chose the latter option, and for a time continued to serve as the secretariat for the *CPG on Health Inequalities.*

5 APGs in Canada

Although they have recently grown at a similar rate in proportional terms, Canada still has only about one-sixth as many APGs as the UK – a much larger difference than would be predicted based on the number of legislators in each parliament. Canada’s APG system is also much less regulated than that in the UK or Scotland. Unlike other jurisdictions, the Canadian Parliament has only established a complete registry for the 16 inter-country APGs that receive full or partial legislative funding for their operations. A voluntary registry is maintained for the other inter-country groups that do not receive parliamentary funding, but no records are kept for Canadian subject APGs. This situation makes it difficult to precisely track APG growth, operations, and membership patterns.

In addition to providing a contrast to the UK and Scotland, examining the APG system at the Canadian Parliament also allows us to explore how the groups come to be accepted and institutionalized within a legislature, something that took place in the UK quite some time ago. Indeed there are growing concerns regarding Canadian APGs that have given rise to some
tentative steps towards increased transparency in recent years, although only through the regulation of MPs’ behaviour, not of the groups themselves.

5.1 Growth of APGs at the Canadian Parliament

APG creation in Canada did not begin in earnest until the early 1980s. In his study of parliamentary diplomacy, Levy (1974) identified just six inter-country APGs at the Canadian Parliament as of the early 1970s. Of these, the oldest were the Canadian sections of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, founded in 1905 and 1911 respectively (Canada. Parliament, 2015; Odette, 2012). Over 40 years then passed until the next group, the Canadian section of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO-PA), was formed in 1955. The Canada-United States Inter-parliamentary Group came soon after in 1959, becoming Canada’s first bilateral inter-country APG. The Canada-France Parliamentary Association and the Canadian section of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie then followed in the 1960s. There is no record of any further inter-country groups being founded until the early 1980s, which saw the creation of APGs for Europe, Germany, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan (Canada. Parliament, 2015; Hulme, 2010). The creation of inter-country APGs then continued steadily through the 1980s and 1990s, reaching approximately 47 in operation by 2003 (Parliamentary Centre, 2003).

It is unclear which subject APG was the first to be established at the Canadian Parliament. The oldest reference in Hansard is a 1983 statement by the Chair of the Canadian Parliamentary Group on Soviet Jewry (Peterson, 1983). The group’s members networked with external stakeholders and raised the plight of Soviet Jews through members’ statements and interventions in debates. The Parliamentary Steel Caucus was founded soon after, becoming the first subject APG to deal with a domestic industry – although it too had an international dimension. The group was created in the mid-1980s after meetings on trade issues between members of the Congressional Steel Caucus and Canadian MPs from steel producing constituencies (Parliamentary Centre, 2003). The Canadian Steel Caucus, which remains in operation to this day, went on to be an active participant in parliamentary debates on Canada-US trade late 1980s, and has maintained close relationships with its US counterpart.

Figure 2.6 outlines the growth of APGs in Canada since 2003, the first year for which mostly complete lists of inter-country APGs are available. In each year except 2003, the number of
groups reflects those in operation at the end of a Parliament immediately prior to an election. As can be seen, the total number in operation nearly doubles over the period from 57 to 112. Particularly remarkable is the expansion of subject groups, which more than tripled from 12 to 40. As is discussed further in the next chapter, the rate of group creation is actually higher than it appears given that many APGs dissolve once an issue is resolved or the group chair leaves Parliament. A full list of the inter-country groups and subject groups identified at the Canadian Parliament can be located in Appendices I and II respectively.

**Figure 2.6 – Number of all-party groups at the Canadian Parliament, 2003 – 2015**

![Bar chart showing the number of all-party groups at the Canadian Parliament, 2003–2015](chart.png)

As in the UK and Scotland, the growth of APGs has been accompanied by an increase in their diversity. Figure 2.7 presents the numbers of inter-country groups at the Canadian Parliament by region in 2003 and 2015. In 2003 Canada had 21 inter-country APGs focused on relations with European countries, but just six for those in Asia and the Pacific. By 2015 the number for Europe had crept up to 30, in large part thanks a series of new groups for the countries in the Balkans. In contrast, the number for countries in Asia and the Pacific more than tripled to 21, making it by far the fastest growing region. At the other extreme, Sub-saharan Africa remained the only region to be served by a single group, namely the *Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association*. These changes show some similarity to those in the UK, where APGs for countries in the Asia-Pacific region were also the fastest growing. Yet the UK also witnessed substantial growth in the
number of groups targeting Sub-Saharan Africa, suggesting UK parliamentarians have a broader geographic interest.

**Figure 2.7 – Growth of inter-country APGs in Canada by region of focus, 2003 – 2015**

Figure 2.8 presents the number of subject APGs by area of focus in 2003 and 2015. Just 12 subject APGs operated in Canada at the first time period, and while industry-specific groups were the most numerous, no particular type dominated. Since then the range of topics addressed has expanded greatly, with groups now operating issues including arts and heritage, the environment, health, and social affairs. Mirroring the UK, APGs on health care have seen the greatest growth, and as of 2015 there were groups that captured a broad spectrum of health issues, such as specific diseases (*Eating Disorders, Juvenile Diabetes, HIV/AIDS*), healthcare delivery (*Palliative Care*), specific populations (*Seniors*)\(^{15}\) and the development of new treatments (*Health Research*). Similar diversification can also be seen in the area of the environment, which saw the emergence of groups on *Climate Change, International Conservation*, and *Oceans*.

\(^{15}\) The All-Party Seniors Caucus is classified under healthcare given that it is focused on seniors’ care and is supported by the Canadian Medical Association.
Among industry-specific caucuses, just one of those active in 2003, the *Parliamentary Steel Caucus*, remained in operation as of 2015. By that time it had joined by six new groups on topics including *Aerospace, Beer, and Tourism*. Even though the number of groups is relatively small, some overlap can already be seen, such as between the *Aerospace* and *Space* caucuses, and the *Tourism* and *Golf* caucuses. Besides these industry groups, there are also now APGs focusing on general types of businesses, such as the *Entrepreneur Caucus*, which deals with small business, and the *Co-operatives Caucus*.

**Figure 2.8 – Growth of subject APGs in Canada by issue of focus, 2003 – 2015**

5.2 Ethical concerns and regulatory evolution

The Canadian Parliament’s International and Interparliamentary Affairs Directorate (IIAD) provides full financial and administrative support – including travel costs and access to Library of Parliament researchers – for a small number of inter-country APGs known as “Parliamentary
Associations.” A secondary category of APGs, referred to as “Interparliamentary Groups,” also receives basic administrative support from IIAD, which maintains their membership lists, collects dues, and assists at their annual general meetings. However, these groups receive no financial support for meetings or travel, meaning that they must rely on contributions from their members or external actors.

A committee of MPs and Senators called the Joint Interparliamentary Council (JIC) was created in 1995 specifically to manage such support. According to JIC criteria set in 2003, Associations must have at least 50 members from both the House and Senate who together represent at least three of the recognized parties in Parliament. They also must not overlap with an existing group, and “must represent the relationships between countries or groups of countries, or regions of the world, and not simply causes.” Potential Interparliamentary Groups must meet virtually the same standards, but need only 20 members to qualify. They also must be aimed at improving relations with entities recognized by Government of Canada, a rule that excludes the Canada-Taiwan and Canada-Palestine friendship groups from this category. Thus far JIC has approved 12 inter-country Associations: Canada’s delegations to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, NATO-PA, Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie, and ParlAmericas; two regional associations for countries in Africa and Europe16; and five bilateral associations for major world powers (China, France, Japan, the UK and the US) (Canada. Parliament, 2011). The last was the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association in 2003. Curiously, despite the existence of several inter-country APGs that appear to meet the criteria (for instance, the Canada-Korea Friendship Group has operated continuously since the early 1980s), only those for Germany, Ireland, Israel, and Italy have achieved interparliamentary group status.

In addition to the requirements set out above, the APGs recognized by the JIC are subject to public disclosure requirements, with the IIAD website regularly publishing lists of their members and executive officers, as well as copies of their constitutions and the dates of their annual general meetings. Given that their travel and meetings are publicly funded, the 12 associations must also table reports after each activity they undertake.

16 The Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association manages Canada’s participation as an observer at the parliamentary assemblies of the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.
All other APGs at the Canadian Parliament are not subject to any regulations. The IIAD website does contain a list of unrecognized inter-country APGs, which it refers to as “Other Interparliamentary Groups” (OIGs). Some subject groups that deal with international issues, such as Canadian Parliamentarians for Global Action, are included on the list as well. However, the OIG list is voluntary and the only detail recorded is the identity of the group’s chair (Canada. Parliament, 2013). Except for the handful that appear on the OIG list, no records of subject groups are maintained.

Table 2.3 – Regulation and parliamentary support for Canadian APGs by group type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th># of groups</th>
<th>Rules for composition</th>
<th>Registration</th>
<th>Disclosure</th>
<th>Admin support</th>
<th>Operating costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supported inter-country APGs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary associations</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Compulsory</td>
<td>Membership + activities</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interparl. Groups</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Compulsory</td>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other interparl. groups (OIGs)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject APGs</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.3 summarizes the differing levels of regulation and support for the various types of Canadian APGs. As can be seen, the vast majority of groups (94 out of 112) operating in 2015 were not subject to any rules or regulations. Therefore, while a small number of officially recognized inter-country APGs have become a formal part of the Parliament, overall the system of APGs in Canada is much less regulated than in the UK or Scotland. In particular, there is no way to be sure whether an APG truly operates on an all-party basis, which parliamentarians take part, or whether its operations are free from external influence. This situation not only prevents precise group counts, but also facilitates the presence of APGs that exist in name only. In particular, there have been instances where a parliamentarian or a lobby group claimed to have created a new APG, but no supporting documents could be found. A perfect example is the Refreshments Canada Caucus, which Refreshments Canada (an association of soft drink makers) claimed to have created in 2004 (O’Malley, 2004). However, no reference to the caucus could be located in parliamentary debates or through internet searches.
In the absence of rules requiring the disclosure of the external support, Canadian APGs have largely avoided the concerns over such funding seen in the UK and Scotland. The primary exception revolves around the one element of APG activity that is made public: travel. MPs must declare the cost of the “sponsored travel” they accept from outside groups to Canada’s Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner. While the registry of sponsored travel covers all trips paid for by external actors, not just those through the OIGs, much of the travel is linked to APG activity. At least once a year, journalists will write about the sponsored travel undertaken by MPs with funding from foreign governments or external lobbyists, typically referring to the trips as “junkets” and presenting them as opportunities for external interests to influence MPs.17 There is also regular criticism of the cost of the travel undertaken by the officially recognized associations as well. These critiques intensified as the government began to cut its spending following the 2008 financial crash (Naumetz, 2010, 2011, 2013). There were also concerns over the cost paid by the government for an Inter-Parliamentary Union conference in Quebec city, which included $200,000 for a performance by Cirque du Soleil (Fekete, 2013).

The only substantial concerns raised over the funding of subject APGs in Canada were in relation to the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism. The group sought external support for its inquiry into antisemitism in Canada and for a subsequent inter-parliamentary conference, ultimately raising $127,078 in private donations and $451,280 in government funding from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (Geddes, 2011). However, contrary to initial promises of transparency, no list of donors was ever made public.

There are, however, some signs that the Canadian system may be shifting towards greater institutionalization. In 2009, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs recommended revising the Conflict of Interest Code for Members of the House of Commons to specify that MPs’ obligation to report gifts from outside sources applied to those received from “all-party caucuses” (2009). The measures were adopted by the House soon after. During the committee’s next review of the Conflict of Interest Code in 2015, Mary Dawson, the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, recommended further amendments to the rules for sponsored travel. The existing rules required MPs to report travel valued over $500 if the “costs

17 (see for example Beaulne-Stuebing, 2015; McGregor, 2013; McKenna, 2012; “MPs defend travel sponsored by lobbyists,” 2010; Smith, 2014; Solomon, 2012)
are not wholly or substantially paid” by the House, the government, a political party, or “any interparliamentary association or friendship group recognized by the House” (Canada. House of Commons, 2014). Dawson argued the phrase “substantially paid” was vague and could lead to outside support going unreported. External funding could also first be given to an interparliamentary group and then used to cover travel by MPs, obscuring the true source of the funds. In response, the committee recommended lowering the threshold for reporting sponsored travel from $500 to $200; requiring the disclosure of all sponsored travel over $200, no matter how much was paid by other sources; and requiring the disclosure of sponsored travel paid through interparliamentary groups (Canada. House of Commons. Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, 2015). The Commons agreed to the changes in June 2015.

6 APGs in Ontario

Despite having greater powers and just 22 fewer members than the Scottish Parliament, in 2014 the Ontario legislature had just four APGs compared to Holyrood’s 88. While the lack of a registry makes it challenging to say for certain how many are in operation, there are some signs that the number of groups may be growing, in part due to inspiration from other jurisdictions. The low number of groups also makes it an excellent case through which to explore which factors may limit APG growth, and to test the impact of those forces that appear to be driving APG creation in the other jurisdictions.

As with the Canadian Parliament, the Ontario Legislature operates a series of officially recognized inter-parliamentary associations that conduct exchanges with legislators in other jurisdictions. However, the associations at Queen’s Park are largely controlled by the Speaker, who serves as the chair of each group. This structure was adopted to ensure that the groups operate in a non-partisan fashion, but means that they cannot be considered as APGs in this study.18

Table 2.4 lists the subject APGs operating at Queen’s Park, the majority of which were established in the last ten years. The one exception is the Cement Caucus, which held its 13th

18 For discussions of the inter-parliamentary associations at the Ontario legislature see Malcolmson (1987) and Tutunzis (2011).
annual meeting in 2007, presumably putting its creation in 1994. Curiously there was a small spike in caucus formation in 2008-09, which mirrors the growth in APGs at the Canadian Parliament over the same period. Indeed, as described further in the next chapter, one of the Ontario caucuses, the Trent Severn Caucus, is actually composed of members from both the Canadian Federal Parliament and the Ontario Legislative Assembly. Despite the small number of groups in operation, the issues they cover are diverse, ranging from health care to transportation. Aside from the Trent Severn Caucus, all of the subject groups had an external partner that helped to organize meetings and fund events. However, no effort has yet been made to regulate the operation of Ontario’s APGs.

7 Conclusion

The APGs at the British, Canadian, Scottish, and Ontario legislatures illustrate the wide variations that exist between jurisdictions in terms of group prevalence, structure, and operations, as well as the diverse approaches that different legislatures have taken for regulating group activities. This variation is unexpected given that all four are Westminster style legislatures, with relatively similar procedures and party systems. Indeed most surprising is that the APGs at the Scottish Parliament have in a relatively short period of time evolved to become substantially different in both form and function from their counterparts in the UK. In particular, while the regulations for APGs at Holyrood have consistently reaffirmed the ability of external partners to serve as full group members and to help direct their affairs, those governing the APGs at

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19 The list was developed through web searches, the limited academic literature, and interviews with MPPs. It is possible that other APGs may be operating at the legislature, or have done so in the past.

20 The caucus was renamed “Lung Health Caucus” after Ontario’s 2011 election.
Westminster have increasingly concentrated decision-making power among parliamentarians themselves.

Notwithstanding these different regulatory trajectories, the external support received by APGs has nonetheless led to perennial concerns in both the UK and Scotland that the groups may be overly influenced by outside lobbyists. The authorities in each jurisdiction have responded to these anxieties by repeatedly tightening the rules for disclosure, yet both remain committed to the idea that the presence of APGs can enrich the operation of their respective parliaments, and neither has proposed banning the provision of external support. However, Scotland has gone much further to promote transparency in APG operations, requiring groups to post advance notice of their meetings on the parliament’s website, to hold their meetings in public, and to post minutes of group events online. By comparison, APGs at Westminster have no obligation to post any details about their meetings either before they occur or after. Scotland also has a lower threshold for disclosing external support (£500 versus £1500). All told, the APGs at Holyrood often appear as an extension of the Parliament’s commitment to engage with civil society, while those at the British Parliament can resemble private clubs for politicians with particular interests. That said, the presence of unregistered APGs at Westminster suggests that any toughening of the regulatory system could lead more groups to avoid registering entirely.

Even with these differences, the APG systems in the UK and Scotland are still comparatively well regulated. In contrast, the situation in Canada and Ontario resembles the Wild West, with the latter having no rules at all, while the regulations in the former apply to just a small segment of geographic groups. This lack of regulation means that the groups at the two Canadian jurisdictions tend to be less formally structured than their counterparts across the Atlantic, with many lacking defined members beyond their executives. Their operations also tend to be highly opaque, with few disclosing any details about their meetings, activities, or finances. As will be discussed further in later chapters, the lack of regulation regarding financial transparency and minimum levels of cross-partisanship leaves the APGs in both jurisdictions particularly open to charges of being unrepresentative and unduly influenced by external actors.

Both Canada and especially Ontario also lag far behind the UK and Scotland in terms of APG formation. In fact as of 2015 there were there are more subject-focused APGs at the 129 member Scottish Parliament than in the Canadian Parliament and the Ontario Legislature combined. This
outcome is surprising given that both Canada and the UK each had fewer than 10 groups in operation in 1955 (three and nine respectively). As such, the lower prevalence of APGs in Canada and Ontario suggests that the two may possess certain traits that inhibit APG development.

Yet despite these differences, the pattern of APG expansion in recent years is surprisingly similar in Canada, Scotland, and the UK, with subject groups related to healthcare growing faster at each legislature than those for any other issue. Moreover, APGs on healthcare and those for specific industrial sectors are now the first and second most common sub-types of subject APGs in both Scotland and the UK, and are tied for the largest sub-type in Canada. Similar trends also extend to inter-country APGs, with those focused on the Asia-Pacific region being most numerous at each of the three legislatures. This parallel growth suggests that APG expansion is being driven at least to some extent by common factors in each jurisdiction. The next chapter reviews past attempts to develop theories that can explain such common trends, and identifies the shortcomings that each has faced.
CHAPTER 3
THEORIES OF APG DEVELOPMENT

1 Introduction

Although the academic literature on APGs is limited, three theories have been put forward to account for their emergence and operation. The most recent is Ringe et al.’s (2013) information-exchange model, which holds that APGs developed to help legislators overcome the collective action problem that they face in obtaining a sufficient supply of policy relevant information. The second is Victor and Ringe’s (2009) social network theory, which contends that APGs allow “disadvantaged” legislators to form connections with their more powerful and electorally secure colleagues. Last is the goal achievement account, variants of which have been put forward by Hammond (1998), Singh (1996), and Morgan (1979). It argues that APGs emerged because they help legislators to achieve their goals in a changing context characterized by increasing external demands, rising policy complexity, and institutional changes that limited the influence of junior or backbench members.

This chapter explores each of these theories, detailing both the insights they provide and critiquing their inability to explain the growth of APGs across jurisdictions. The chapter concludes with a review of the contributions from this research and theoretical work, the gaps that remain, and the components necessary for a comprehensive theory of APG growth. This analysis reveals that the existing theories fail to incorporate several major factors that shape the formation and activities of APGs, such as the influence of external stakeholders and the benefits that accrue to the legislators who lead each group. They also lack any account of the variations in APG prevalence that exist between jurisdictions. However, given that most of the past theoretical work on APGs comes from the United States and the European Parliament, the chapter first provides a brief sketch of the APG systems in these legislatures to provide the context for the later review.
2 APGs at the US Congress and European Parliament

The APGs at the US Congress and the European Parliament have been more closely studied than those in any other jurisdiction. They also serve as the basis for most of the theoretical explanations of APG activities that have so far been developed. However, the number of APGs in operation and the rules that govern their activities are very different between the two jurisdictions.

Despite the institutional differences between them, the history of APG growth at the US Congress closely resembles that in the UK. While precursors could be found as far back as the 1800s, the first modern APG at the US Congress, the *Arms Control and Foreign Policy Caucus*, was founded in the late 1960s (Hammond 1998). The number of groups grew slowly at first, but began to multiply rapidly in the 1980s. While initially worried that APGs were a challenge to their authority, congressional leaders gradually came to accept them “as it became evident that caucuses offer opportunities for achieving institutional as well as collective goals” (Hammond, 1998: 76). Regulations governing the APGs at Congress were first introduced in 1979. In return for basic disclosure requirements, APGs were allowed to register as “Legislative Service Organizations” (LSOs), giving them access to congressionally funded administrative support, such as office space and funding for staff (Ringe et al., 2013). Many APGs also received outside assistance from stakeholder organizations and lobbyists. A few even established dedicated external organizations to support their work, such as the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (Hammond, 1998).

By the early 1990s, concerns grew louder regarding the links between congressional APGs and external lobby groups (Ringe et al., 2013). Some observers charged that caucuses were being used to circumvent ethics rules, such as those preventing representatives from hiring their family members. Many Republicans also believed that APGs were more beneficial to policy positions favoured by the Democrats (Hammond, 1998). When the Republicans took control of the House in the 1994, they introduced new regulations to curtail the activities of APGs (Singh, 1996). APGs were reclassified from LSOs to “Congressional Member Organizations” (CMOs), and were no longer be able to directly employ staff, utilize congressional offices, or receive funds from outside organizations.
While group creation slowed somewhat in the initial years after the reform, rapid growth soon resumed. The number of APGs more than tripled from 75 in 2000 to 240 in 2004, and eventually hit an all-time high of 388 in 2012 (Dilger and Glassman, 2014). The most 2012-2014 session of Congress saw a slight decline, with just 325 in operation (United States. Congress. Committee on House Administration, 2014). However, this drop was offset by a continued rise in the number of unregistered groups, which jumped from 301 in the previous session to a new high of 415 (Dilger and Glassman, 2014).

Thanks to their rapid pace of growth, APGs at Congress now deal with a bewildering array of issues. Personal interest caucuses, which are those created by politicians who share a common interest in a given subject, accounted for nearly half (157) of the registered APGs in 2014. Intercountry groups were second at 60, followed by industry groups at 54. There were also 28 “national constituency” groups, which are APGs that represent distinct segments of society, such as women, African-Americans, or members of a particular occupation (Dilger and Glassman, 2014). The increase in the number of groups in recent years has also been accompanied by an increasing overlap between their areas of focus. For instance, in 2014 there were three registered APGs operating on border issues: the Congressional Border Caucus, the Congressional Border Security Caucus, and the Northern Border Caucus (United States. Congress. Committee on House Administration, 2014).

Under the rules introduced in 1995, there are still some benefits that come with registration. Representatives are not supposed to assign their staff to work on the activity of unregistered groups and are prohibited from mentioning them in their official communications or websites (Dilger and Glassman, 2014). However, the majority of American APGs either no longer choose to go through this process, and even those that do register have begun to disregard the restrictions in place. Some have resumed employing dedicated staffers, with a different Member of Congress paying the staffer’s salary each month (Ringe et al., 2013). Several of the dedicated foundations, like the Black Caucus Foundation and the Congressional Fire Services Institute, also continue to operate.

APGs at the European Parliament are known as “Intergroups.” Such groups began to form almost immediately after direct elections to the Parliament began in 1979, with the first, the Intergroup of Elected Local and Regional Representatives, being officially recognized in 1980.
While the individual APGs at the Parliament operate in a similar fashion to those in other jurisdictions, the system of group regulation is quite different, with a hard cap imposed on the number of groups that receive official recognition. The cap was set at 24 groups for the 2004-09 term, and then rose to 27 after the 2009 elections (Ringe et al., 2013). The various party groups vote on which APGs will fill the available positions, with each party group receiving a number of ballots in relation to its size (European Parliament, 2014b). Candidate intergroups must receive votes from at least three different party groups to be approved.

Recognized APGs at the European Parliament receive some parliamentary support, such as access to meeting rooms and interpretation services, but in return are subject to strict conditions. Intergroups must provide an annual declaration of the support received from outside actors, and official meetings can only be held at specified times during the Parliament’s sessions in Strasbourg (European Parliament, 2014b). The rules also specify that intergroups are not organs of the Parliament, and cannot present themselves as expressing its view on an issue.

While the number of intergroups is itself largely fixed, the level of participation by Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) is rising, with the average number of memberships held by each MEP growing from 1.68 in the 2004-2009 session to 2.51 in 2009-14 (Ringe et al., 2013). Given the stringency of the rules, there are also a significant number of informal “issue groups” at the Parliament as well. No formal records exist regarding these bodies and estimates of the number in operation vary greatly. In 2007, the Parliament itself reported that there were 40 informal and registered groups combined (European Parliament, 2007).

In addition to the subject-focused intergroups, the European Parliament also is home to “delegations” for relations with international bodies and legislatures in other countries. As of 2014, there were 44 delegations, including 24 bilateral groups (e.g. for Brazil, Canada, and Japan), seven for other international organizations (e.g. NATO Parliamentary Assembly, EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly), and the remainder for broader regions (e.g. Arab Peninsula, Central America) (European Parliament, 2014a). However, their leaders are not chosen independently but rather through negotiations between the various party groups. As such, they cannot be seen as APGs for this analysis.
Together, the APG systems at the US Congress and the European Parliament echo many of the themes that were evident among those in Canada, Ontario, Scotland, and the UK. In particular, they further demonstrate the anxieties that exist among legislative authorities over the links between APGs and external stakeholders. They also illustrate the variation in the regulatory systems for APGs that can be found between jurisdictions, as well as the ongoing balance that legislative authorities must strike between tightening the restrictions on APG funding and activities and pushing some groups to forgo registration all together.

3 Information exchange model

As the profiles above and those in the previous chapter demonstrate, the number of APGs – or at least the level of APG activity – continues to rise in legislatures around the world. Drawing on their case studies of the APGs at the European Parliament and the US Congress, Ringe et al. (2013) theorize that the primary benefit offered by APGs is to facilitate information exchange within a legislature. Specifically, they posit that APGs serve as the solution to a distinct collective action dilemma found in legislative institutions, namely: “the great demand and inadequate supply of policy-relevant information” (2013: 24). Ringe et al. contend that this dilemma exists because legislators have enormous information needs that are never sufficiently met by their office staff or legislative research services. They also stress that members’ information needs extend not only to facts about substantive policy options, but also to strategic political information, such as the level of support for a particular policy within the legislature.

Given this assessment of the challenges facing legislators, Ringe et al.’s theory of the informational benefits of APGs is informed not only by an analysis of their activities, but also their structure. They contend that APGs are voluntary institutions that create weak, bridging ties which allow legislators to cut across the divides created by parties and committee memberships. By “weak ties,” Ringe et al. refer to the infrequent and sporadic contacts that occur between people who are acquaintances (2013: 32). Their work builds heavily from Granovetter’s (1973) discussion of the role of weak ties in allowing information exchange within a social network. Those people who are closely connected to each other through the strong ties of friendship are likely to share the same connections to third parties, and therefore have access to the same information. In contrast, those with whom one is connected only through weak ties are unlikely to share the same third party connections, and hence are more likely to have access to different
information sources. As such, seeking out more weak ties through APGs can increase the volume of information that legislators have available as compared to building only strong ties within their parties or committees.

To support their theoretical propositions, Ringe et al. use social network analysis to demonstrate that the ties created among legislators through their memberships in APGs are indeed bridging since they cut across existing institutional networks and link members who would not otherwise be connected (2013: 141–4). They therefore conclude that the presence of APGs increases the likelihood of information transfer within a legislature by reducing the steps in the chain of transmission between different members. However, Ringe et al. also stress that with just a few events per year, APGs meet too infrequently for such connections to be considered strong ties. Such ties are made even weaker by the fact that some members do not attend meetings themselves, instead sending staff in their place or relying on information distributed via email listserves.

While such limited commitment may sound problematic for an APG’s long term viability, Ringe et al. view it as a strength. APGs’ success in attracting members, they contend, relies on participation being voluntary and cheap, with legislators deciding how much to contribute to each group, if anything (2013: 29–30). In this way, APGs deliberately “invite their members to free-ride on the benefits they offer” in order to maximize the number of weak ties they create (Ringe et al., 2013: 8). However, this situation creates a paradox: Ringe et al. contend that APGs’ primary purpose is to facilitate information exchange through networks of weak, bridging ties among legislators. Yet such networks would be unlikely to last long or even to form in the first place given this minimal commitment from members. Most individuals also doubt the quality of information obtained through weak ties due to their lack of familiarity and trust vis-à-vis the other participants in a network.

To solve this conundrum, Ringe et al. argue that APGs survive despite free-riding and the predominance of weak ties because the necessary group maintenance functions are performed by each group’s external partner organizations and the legislators in its “leadership network.” The external actors make up for free-riding by legislators by providing APGs with “legislative subsidies,” such as financial support, research assistance, member recruitment, event planning, and other secretarial services. While at first appearing largely one-sided, Ringe et al. argue that
“In reality… the relationship is quite symbiotic, with [external] organizations also reaping important benefits” (2013: 180). Specifically, they contend that outside actors are willing to bear these costs in exchange for the formation of “extensive, institutionalized, and privileged ties” with APG members, and particularly their leaders (Ringe et al., 2013: 42). These ties offer regular access to legislators in a fashion that is more efficient than meeting with each separately. Moreover, some of the legislators who take part in an APG may not share the stakeholder’s policy preferences, but are simply concerned with the broader issue. APGs therefore furnish outside actors with a chance to persuade legislators regarding the merits favoured policy options. As Ringe et al. write, “the provision of information as a legislative subsidy cannot be separated from the provision of information as a potential act of persuasion” (2013: 42).

Yet while accepting that APGs may be used as tools for lobbying, Ringe et al. argue that external partners face several incentives that make them less likely to abuse their positions by providing biased or incorrect data. Any organization found to have misled APG members would not only suffer intense reputational harm, but would also lose its access to lawmakers. Given the importance of trust and access within the political system, these sanctions are seen as an effective deterrent. Furthermore, Ringe et al. argue that there is a substantial likelihood that any false information will be discovered given that at least some politicians in an APG (or their staff) will have expertise on the subject, and since most APGs will occasionally engage with other stakeholders who would point out any inaccuracy.

In addition to the subsidies from external partners, Ringe et al. further argue that APGs can survive despite the dominance of weak ties thanks to the relationships formed among the legislators in each group’s “leadership network.” Ringe et al. report that most APGs at both the US Congress and the European Parliament have small leadership networks made up of the co-chairs and perhaps one or two others who undertake most the group administration and maintenance tasks (2013: 38). Within the leadership network, one co-chair is typically drawn from each major party. Group members believe that this approach increases the credibility of an APG, which may have difficulty attracting members if it is perceived to be captured by one party (Ringe et al., 2013).

The interactions among these leaders are in turn seen to be sufficiently frequent and intense to become strong ties. At the same time, the regular interactions between the members of the
leadership network and representatives from the external partner organizations are believed to produce additional strong ties with those actors as well. These ties with the partner organizations foster trust among the general free-riding membership in the quality of the information provided by each APG. Consequently, Ringe et al. argue that APG networks combine the best of both worlds, using strong ties within the leadership network to ensure cross-party trust and information quality while simultaneously harnessing weak, bridging ties to facilitate efficient information distribution.

To determine whether their information-exchange theory could predict the presence or absence of APGs in a given jurisdiction, Ringe et al. also undertook a wide scale study of APG activity in 45 advanced democracies (2013: 51). They hypothesized that APGs were more likely to be found in political systems that had a greater need for the exchange of information and the coordination of activity among political actors. This included jurisdictions with a large number of legislators and/or political parties, bicameral systems, federal systems, and those with a strong division of powers between the executive and legislative branches. Beyond serving as vehicles for information exchange, they also hypothesized that increased social diversity and the use of a majoritarian electoral system may increase the demand for APGs as tools for symbolic and substantive representation as well as signalling to constituents.

The data for the study were collected through a survey of legislative officials and academics. 21 APGs were found in 25 of the countries examined, with the results indicating that the presence of APGs is correlated with just three of the hypothesized factors: majoritarian electoral system, legislature size, and the number of parties. All of the countries with majoritarian electoral systems had APGs, suggesting that they do help members to represent and signal to their constituents. APGs were also found in all of the legislatures that used proportional representation (PR) and had both more members and more parties than the sample average (287 and 4.06, respectively). Conversely, APGs were located in just half of the PR jurisdictions that were above average on only one of the two scores, and none of the eight PR countries that were below average on both dimensions. As such, Ringe et al. contend “that the existence of [APGs] is in

21 The author was one of the respondents for the expert survey.
part explained by institutional factors at the level of the legislature itself that produce a greater need for information exchange and political coordination” (2013: 57).

### 3.1 Shortcomings of the information exchange model

Ringe et al. should be hailed for their efforts to develop a generalizable theoretical account of the function and benefits provided by APGs. However, focusing solely on APGs’ informational role creates several difficulties that severely limit the theory’s utility, especially with regard to its application to Westminster systems or its capacity to explain the rise in the number of APGs over time. The information exchange theory hinges on the premise that legislators have an insatiable need for policy relevant information. Yet this assumption primarily holds true in jurisdictions that have a strong separation of powers between the executive and the legislature, such as the US or the European Parliament. As mentioned in the first chapter, Ringe et al. argue that “there is much less need for political coordination in Westminster [legislatures] than in some other legislatures, given the primacy of single-party cabinets, the dominance of the legislative majority party, a pronounced government-opposition dynamic, and high levels of party discipline” (2013: 21). However, many of these factors that reduce the need for political coordination should also reduce legislators’ demand for information as well: if Westminster legislators are largely told how to vote by their party leaders, then they would appear to have much less need for policy information than their counterparts at Congress and the European Parliament.

Ringe et al.’s focus on information exchange also undermines their ability to explain APG growth. Although their theory centres on the information benefits provided by APGs, they do not deny that the groups perform other functions as well. Instead, they argue that information exchange is a “universal property” of APGs, and is the foundation for other functions like political coordination. They also stress that this focus on information-exchange flows directly from their case studies: “our empirical results… overwhelmingly support the proposition that LMOs’ major benefit lies in their capacity to provide and diffuse policy-relevant signalling information among legislative actors. Ascribing a secondary role to the signalling and coordination function is, therefore, not simply an a priori theoretical decision” (2013: 9–10).

Yet while making it clear that APGs provide information benefits to their members, Ringe et al.’s theory does not explain why groups form nor why members choose to participate. These are not limitations that one must infer from their writings, but are openly admitted: “Our theory
highlights weak and bridging [APG] ties as an informational benefit, not as their raison d'être… While legislators consistently emphasize the value of establishing relationships with colleagues from other parties and committees, they do not claim to join LMOs in an effort to reap those benefits” (2013: 142, emphasis added). This assertion that informational benefits do not drive group creation or the participation of members creates substantial problems for Ringe et al.’s model. In particular, despite their extensive discussion of the costs of involvement and the importance of free-riding for group success, the fact that politicians join APGs for purposes other than information suggests that any calculations they make regarding the costs and benefits of APG participation must be based on other factors outside of the model.

The inability of Ringe et al.’s information exchange theory to account for these additional factors can be clearly seen in their international comparison, which found that APGs are most prevalent in countries with majoritarian electoral systems that enable politicians to signal to constituents. Even in those jurisdictions that had many legislators or parties, it is unclear whether the presence of APGs is fuelled by the need for information exchange, or for greater political coordination. Indeed, Ringe et al.’s own case studies found that APGs at the European Parliament are much more engaged in political coordination than their counterparts in Congress, suggesting that political coordination, not information exchange, is a major purpose for the creation of APGs in those settings with a multiplicity of legislators and parties. It is therefore not evident that the presence of APGs in a jurisdiction is a function of politicians’ need for information – either in Westminster-style legislatures or any others.

Looking at the institutional factors that shape politicians’ need for information also is of limited utility for explaining why the number of APGs in a jurisdiction may change over time. Ringe et al. themselves note that more and more Members of Congress and MEPs become involved with APGs in each new legislative session, yet this rising participation has come at a time when the development of information technology has already greatly increased the information available to legislators. Indeed, the ability of congressional staff to quickly find information online would appear to reduce the need for the specialized research services provided by APGs in the 1980s.

Ultimately, Ringe et al.’s own evidence suggests that APGs do not simply exist because they help politicians to overcome collective action problems regarding the insufficient supply of information, but rather because the legislators in each group’s leadership network and the outside
organizations they partner with are willing to bear the cost of establishing the groups and subsidizing theirs operations for those who free-ride. However, while the benefits to the external organizations are largely clear in their writings (i.e. privileged access to sympathetic legislators), those offered to the legislators in the leadership network are more cryptic. Ringe et al. contend that group leaders are willing to build such strong ties for three main reasons, which are worth quoting in full:

First, their voluntary membership in the leadership network implies that they care more than the average member about the LMO’s cause; hence, they are more willing to expend time and effort on LMO activities… Second, most political coordination (as opposed to information exchange and signalling) in LMOs happens inside the LMO leadership network. This cooperation and coordination necessitates and therefore increases the value of strong ties (as well as produces them). Third, the value of strong ties is particularly pronounced in the leadership network because the great majority of LMOs purposely set up their leadership to include members of more than one party – legislators who are at least nominally political opponents. In this context, where political actors with divergent preferences seek to coordinate their activities, the need for reciprocity and trust is particularly pronounced (2013: 38–39).

This passage indicates that in addition to having a greater commitment to the issue, those politicians in an APG’s leadership network bear the cost of maintaining strong ties because: (1) most political coordination happens within the leadership network, and (2) since such cooperation cannot happen without strong ties of trust, especially between those from different parties. Thus, Ringe et al. tautologically argue that those in the leadership network build strong ties with each other because if they did not, the group would not function.

Strangely absent from Ringe et al.’s theoretical argument is any consideration of what benefits those in the leadership network receive from the presence of the APG itself. This gap is surprising since they spend considerable time highlighting the informational benefits that the network structure of APGs offers for those rank-and-file members who free-ride on structure the leaders create. It is highly unlikely that APG leaders would create organizational structure and attract members if there was not some benefit from doing so. Ringe et al. do take some steps to address this oversight in their case studies, noting that APG leaders in the US and EU may receive reputational benefits and a sense of personal satisfaction from their involvement in the APG. As they write, “[APG] leaders receive not only the knowledge that their efforts help advance a cause that they value, but also recognition of their leadership both inside and outside
the legislature… There are, in other words, potential payoffs in serving as [APG] leaders and these payoffs provide an important incentive to cover some of the costs associated with running the groups” (2013: 157–58).

Although Ringe et al. present it quickly, this discussion of the payoffs to APG leaders has profound implications for the process of APG formation. Most significantly, it indicates that having a mass of free-riding legislators who are nominally “members” of an APG increases the influence, legitimacy, and visibility of group leaders by allowing them to claim that they represent a wider constituency of politicians. As such, these free-riders may receive fewer benefits from being part of the group than its leaders receive from having them as members, particularly since such reputational incentives may be valuable in attracting campaign contributions. Indeed, it would seem doubtful if the ties among many of the rank-and-file members in each APG are strong enough to even be considered as “weak.” While Granovetter identifies weak ties as those that exist among acquaintances, simply being in the same room or part of the same mailing list would not seem to meet the level of interaction for any relationship to form.

Moreover, while an enhanced reputation may be important to some legislators, there is still the question of APGs’ impact on policy decisions. Ringe et al. report that the policy influence wielded by APGs in the EU and US is typically indirect. They also contend that APGs do not have the capacity to shape formal legislative decisions, arguing that they “are incapable of imposing meaningful sanctions and are thus a poor mechanism for creating voting coalitions” (2013: 29). In fact, Ringe et al. argue that this limited capacity to shape votes is precisely why parties do not see APGs as threatening their monopoly on legislative activity. Yet the reality that an increasing number of politicians and external organizations are willing to support the operation of APGs suggests that both have come to believe that undertaking activities through APGs will increase the likelihood of obtaining their policy preferences. Furthermore, the growth of APGs implies that such groups are seen to be more efficient and effective vehicles for policy advocacy than other avenues for influence that might be available.

The inclusion of policy change as an incentive for APG creation among both group leaders and external organizations raises the possibility that APGs may not be established on certain topics if the desired change can be more effectively secured through other strategies. In addition, it is
entirely possible that APGs will not be formed on some issues precisely because there are no external actors willing to subsidize the group’s activity. Indeed, Ringe et al.’s model suggests that APGs should be much more common for those subjects that feature well-financed lobby groups, while issues that lack such external advocates are more likely to be missing from the universe of APGs, or at least less well resourced.

This inequality in the resources available for the external actors pursuing different policy goals issues is very important given that they not only subsidize APG activities, but also are their primary sources of information. While partner organizations would likely suffer reputational costs if they provided content that was patently false, it is much more likely that the information they offer presents only one side of an argument. For instance, while there may be some debate over what specific policy measures to endorse, it is unlikely that an APG on nuclear power supported by the nuclear industry would support the view that it should be abandoned in favour of renewable energy sources.

## 4 Social network theory

A previous paper by Victor and Ringe (2009) based solely on the US Congress argued that APGs should be conceptualized as social networks that allow “disadvantaged” legislators to increase their connections to “advantaged legislators.” To support this argument, they used network analysis approaches to test a series of hypotheses regarding the structure of APGs. Their findings reveal that legislators in party or committee leadership positions, those with seniority, and those who are electorally secure tend to have higher network “connectedness” and “centrality” scores within APGs networks relative to those who are comparatively disadvantaged (i.e. lacking leadership positions, seniority, or electoral security). Importantly, these results did not indicate that advantaged legislators necessarily join more APGs. Instead, a higher connectedness score means that the APG connections made by advantaged legislators provide them with more pathways through which they can connect to other legislators at Congress. Similarly, a higher centrality score reveals that advantaged legislators are more directly connected to those who themselves have more connections.

Based on these results, Victor and Ringe conclude that disadvantaged legislators tend to join those APGs that have advantaged legislators as members. As they write, “The result is that party and committee leaders… effectively serve as ‘magnets’ for those who join caucuses to maximize
the utility of their social contacts within the legislature” (2009: 762). These findings in turn lead Victor and Ringe to critique Hammond’s (1998) view that the caucus system serves as an alternative vehicle for influence for those legislators excluded from formal leadership positions. Instead, they argue that APGs actually serve to replicate and reinforce the existing hierarchy found in the formal institutions of Congress, such as parties and committees. Their results also suggest that electorally vulnerable legislators do not use APGs to signal to their constituents.

4.1 Shortcomings of the social network approach

Many of the critiques made to the information exchange theory also apply to the social network approach. The theory is similarly static and cannot explain why APG growth would increase over time, or why it would vary between jurisdictions. It also relies on assumptions that do not appear to hold in Westminster-style legislatures. In particular, the divide between government and opposition and high levels of party discipline found in Westminster systems would greatly reduce the utility that disadvantaged legislators receive from forming ties with senior legislators from other parties. Instead, the primary incentive would be for legislators to form ties with senior members from their own parties through intra-party activities.

Perhaps the greatest challenge to the social network theory, however, is that it conflates different types of legislative advantage into one conceptual category. While it certainly makes sense for new, electorally vulnerable legislators who lack leadership positions to build ties with those in formal positions of power or who possess greater seniority, there is no reason why they would seek to form closer ties with those who are more electorally secure. Indeed, those with larger margins of victory may have no redeeming characteristics other than hailing from states with particular ideological leanings.

A further challenge to the social network approach to APGs is that it cannot explain why the advantaged legislators such as party or committee leaders would wish to take part in APG activities. These politicians are already in dominant positions vis-à-vis other legislators at Congress. Taking part in APGs would therefore appear to offer few additional benefits while imposing further demands on their scarce time. If advantaged legislators are “magnets” that attract disadvantaged politicians, then their involvement would be necessary for a new group to succeed. As such, group formation would occur either when advantaged legislators establish groups on their own, or when a group of disadvantaged politicians convince an advantaged
colleague to participate in a new initiative. Yet without clear benefits to the advantaged members, it is unclear why either scenario would take place.

These difficulties generally reflect the abstract nature of Victor and Ringe’s analysis. Their reliance on formal membership lists does allow them to trace how participation by legislators varies based on a range of factors, such as career stage and margin of victory. Yet by focusing solely on such lists, they fail to explore whether advantaged legislators have any practical involvement in the APGs to which they belong. Rather than indicating a desire for disadvantaged legislators to gain better access to those in formal positions of power, the reality may simply be that advantaged legislators tend to place their name on the membership list for the same mainstream APGs that most Members of Congress also join, hence allowing them to appear quite connected and central while having fewer memberships. Conversely, disadvantaged legislators may be more apt to join somewhat more polarized or niche APGs in addition to the mainstream ones mentioned above. Focusing only on formal membership also completely ignores any consideration of the impact of APGs on policy or legislative outcomes, or their relationships with external actors.

5 Goal oriented accounts

The theories discussed thus far account for the presence of APGs based on the functions and roles that they currently perform. In contrast, Hammond (1998) and Singh (1996) seek to uncover the factors that drove the emergence of APGs at the US Congress and the sharp increase in their numbers from 1970 onward. This approach leads them to develop dynamic explanations that consider the growth of APGs as an adaptive response by legislators to changing conditions. However, while Hammond sees APGs as a response to the growing complexity of policy issues and an increased focus on policy among legislators, Singh argues that they were created by rank-and-file members who sought to reassert their influence relative to party leaders. Although not couched in the same language of “goals,” Morgan’s (1979) study of APGs in the UK reaches similar conclusions, contending that the groups provide a tool for organizing among backbench members who seek to reclaim influence from the executive in an environment of greater policy complexity. While still having some shortcomings, these goal-focused, context-sensitive explanations offer the most fulsome account currently available for the growth of APGs and the factors driving participation by members.
Hammond (1998) asserts that any explanation for the growth of APGs must look holistically at the interaction between the external political environment in which Congress is situated, the objectives of congressional representatives, and the structure of Congress itself. In terms of the external environment, Hammond stresses that the demands placed on congressional representatives 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 independent policy research. As for motivations, Hammond draws on Fenno to argue that Members of Congress seek the goals of reelection, policy change, and influence in the institution (1998: 15). She further notes that those legislators who were first elected in the post-Watergate era have become increasingly focused on policy goals and often act as “independent policy entrepreneurs” (1998: 47). Newer members also tended to be more educated, better informed, and to expect that the government should provide meaningful responses to complex policy issues.

Turning to the structure of Congress, Hammond presents the institution as somewhat Janus-faced. On one side, she notes that the formal elements of Congress, such as the structure of committees, are quite difficult to change and are therefore “not immediately responsive to context or goal shifts” (1998: 17). On the other, she argues that the pattern of interpersonal interactions within institution is both inclusive and flexible. Specifically, 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 exists lacks strong inducements or sanctions to shape members’ behaviour, with “Congressional norms” instead “favor[ing] 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.

Based on this combined analysis of the external context, congressional structure, and legislators’ motivations, Hammond argues that APGs developed at Congress because its formal structure could not cope with members’ increased focus on policy outcomes and the increased demands placed on Congress as a whole. As she writes:

Congress had difficulty processing the growing number and complexity of demands. As deficiencies in the formal system continued, it became more difficult for members to achieve their goals. The characteristics of Congress as an
organization were conducive to the establishment of caucuses as an adaptive response... When party leaders failed to address sufficiently issue or policy coordination concerns of members, members had the reason and the opportunity to form caucuses. Organizational attributes of collegiality, structural fluidity, low integrative authority and permeability and ease of access facilitated caucus formation (1998: 14).

Hammond sees caucus participation as contributing to all three of the goals identified by Fenno. Regarding reelection, just joining a caucus without being actively involved can help a representative since “it sends a message to constituents that the member shares their concerns” (1998: 79). She further finds that those from more marginal electoral districts had a slightly higher level of involvement in APGs than those with a greater vote share. APGs are also helpful for pursuing policy goals, with Hammond stressing that involvement in APGs allowed Members of Congress to have an impact on policy earlier in their careers than would be possible through the formal system, where positions are allocated by seniority. In this vein, her study shows that membership in APGs was higher among junior members and those without formal party or committee leadership positions. Finally, Hammond argues that involvement with APGs allows representatives to improve their chances for future promotion to formal leadership positions by developing leadership skills and building relationships with their colleagues. All told, Hammond finds that APGs were of greatest interest to newer members who were excluded from formal leadership positions and who were hoping to build a base for future advancement.

While similarly finding that APGs are an adaptive response by legislators to changes both within Congress and the external environment, Singh (1996) focuses on a somewhat different range of changes than those considered by Hammond. Singh contends that the congressional reforms introduced in the 1970s disadvantaged “rank-and-file” members. Specifically, the reforms both concentrated power by giving party leaders more authority over committee placements, and also dispersed it by increasing the role of sub-committees. At the same time, Singh argues that the process of campaigning changed due to the spread of television and the emergence of professional campaign consultants and polling firms. These developments made elections more individualistic and increased the need for constituency service. Ultimately these observations lead Singh to reach virtually the same conclusions as Hammond, namely that APGs emerged and grew because they helped rank-and-file members to obtain greater policy influence, signal to constituents, and to track policy issues that were being handled by multiple committees.
Surprisingly, Morgan (1979) reached very similar conclusions regarding the factors driving APG growth in his study of groups at the British Parliament conducted nearly two decades prior. Based on interviews with 59 MPs, Morgan argued that the expansion in the number of APGs since the 1960s was part of backbenchers’ efforts to cope with changes in the operation of Parliament and the broader political system that had diminished their influence:

[MPs] were generally united on one point, that the range of issues handled by the Executive was growing in size and complexity and that party government in the House had, in the words of one Member, "virtually neutered" the backbencher. All party groups, with the access they provided to expertise and the added status they gave to members, could be seen as a reaction to this (Morgan, 1979: 64).

Echoing Singh, Morgan argues that this “added status” offered by APGs resulted from the rise of media influence on the political system, with APGs being a “platform” that politicians could use to increase their visibility. And like Hammond, Morgan also noted that the legislators entering Parliament in the 1960s were generally better educated and more “professional” than their predecessors and hence more attracted to detailed policy work.

Whether a result of Morgan’s study, the argument that APGs at Westminster grew in response to a decline in backbench influence was also advanced by the British Parliament itself. This account can be found on the House of Commons Library “Fact sheet” on all-party groups, which at least as far back as 1981 provided the following explanation for the activities of APGs:

Over the years since 1945, it has been argued, less and less influence has been exerted by backbench Members in the formulation of government policy, and there has been insufficient consultation between backbenchers and Ministers. These All-Party Groups can sometimes serve as a counterbalance to this. They have a liaison function and can, when necessary, exert pressure on a Minister to modify policy or influence legislation and further action in particular areas. They thus play a part in the flexible pattern of consultation that Government nowadays employs in order to sound out views both inside and outside Parliament.

To sum up, All-Party Groups may draw attention to certain aspects of public affairs, may assist in keeping the Government informed of parliamentary opinion, and may act as pressure-groups to promote some particular cause (United Kingdom. House of Commons. Public Information Office, 1981b).

This same explanation remained on subsequent editions of the fact sheet until 1996 (United Kingdom. House of Commons. Public Information Office, 1996)
The striking similarities between the findings of Hammond, Singh, and Morgan suggests that APGs can provide assist legislators to achieve their goals of policy influence, reelection, and influence in the institution. Moreover, by looking at the emergence of caucuses as an adaptive response to changes in the external environment and the goals of members, these studies avoid many of the pitfalls that undermine the theories put forward by Ringe et al. (2013) and Victor and Ringe (2008). In particular, they each identify the reasons that legislators actually join APGs rather than attempting to infer such motivations from patterns of APG behaviour. Their extended time horizon also allows them to explain why group numbers have changed over time.

5.1 Shortcomings of the goal achievement approach

Despite these strengths, the goal achievement explanations put forward by Hammond, Singh, and Morgan also suffer from a number of difficulties, some of which pertain to each study, and some of which pertain to their arguments as a whole. Hammond’s study is the most comprehensive of the three and provides a broad range of data to support her arguments, yet her decision to examine both APGs and intraparty caucuses simultaneously makes it challenging to know whether her findings apply equally to both types of groups. A much larger problem, however, is that the focus on a single case leads her to overemphasize the extent to which the distinctive elements of the congressional system, such as collegiality, inclusiveness, and a lack of hierarchy, are necessary preconditions for the emergence of APGs. The growth of APGs in legislatures around the globe, including in more divided, hierarchical Westminster legislatures, suggests that these attributes are not in fact required for APGs to emerge. Similar doubt is also created by the fact that APGs have continued to thrive at Congress despite increasing partisan polarization. Indeed, on a proportionate basis in the 113th Congress (2012-2014) there were substantially fewer APGs operating in the US Senate – which is more collegial and inclusive than the House of Representatives – when based on Hammond’s analysis one would expect to find that the opposite is true (Dilger and Glassman, 2014).

A similar overemphasis on institutional distinctiveness can also be found in Morgan’s (1979) argument that the growth of APGs was fuelled by the declining influence of Parliament relative to the executive. If true, this argument would imply that the number of APGs should decline if Parliament reclaimed some of its former power. Yet the strengthening of the British Parliament relative to the executive that has occurred in recent years (see for example Russell and Cowley,
2015) has not been matched by a decline in the number of APGs, but rather by their continued expansion. This reality suggests either that APGs are now playing a different role than they were before, or that their growth was less tied to the decline of legislative influence than Morgan had originally argued.

All three studies are also harmed by their failure to systematically consider the role that external actors and lobbyists play in group formation and maintenance. Indeed, the role of outside actors in the creation and operation of APGs is not considered at all by Morgan (1979). Such actors do receive some attention from Hammond, who notes that such stakeholders can be involved pushing for caucus formation, recruiting new members, and providing information. However, Hammond does not consider how such legislative subsidies have enabled the expansion of APGs, or how differences in the resources available to the external actors in different policy sectors, or even among different actors in the same policy field, may limit group formation and thereby alter the balance of information received by legislators.

Finally, each study also demonstrates the rationalistic focus on goal achievement that can be found in the information exchange and social network accounts. In particular, by arguing that APGs form to help legislators pursue career-centric goals, like influencing policy or securing reelection, they ignore the reality that many APGs do not appear to serve either of these objectives. For instance, it is doubtful that the members of the UK’s APPG for Turks and Caicos, the Scottish Parliament’s CPG on Cuba, or the Canada-Brunei Friendship Group either ran for office primarily to better relations with those jurisdictions, or have substantial numbers of constituents who are concerned with their fates. And while parliamentarians themselves may be personally interested in these jurisdictions, the time spent developing and maintaining these groups would appear to reduce their capacity to pursue larger policy objectives or to secure reelection. The same would likely be true for many subject APGs on niche issues, such as the UK’s APPGs on Basketball and Classic Rock and Blues.

6 Conclusion: towards a comprehensive theory of APG growth

The existing theories that have been developed to explain the operation and growth of APGs each has significant shortcomings. Both the information exchange model and the social network theory are missing any account of why the number of APGs has grown in recent years. Instead,
the theories are static, explaining the benefits offered by groups that already exist. This gap could perhaps be forgiven if they provided a strong explanation of APG formation, yet here too both theories are lacking. Indeed, Ringe et al. (2013) deliberately exclude the question of group formation from the information-exchange model, and also fail to explain why group leaders and their external partners choose to assume the costs of group creation and maintenance that are essential to attract the “free-riding” membership. Likewise the social network theory argues that “rank-and-file” members join APGs to form closer ties with “advantaged” members, but offer no account of why such advantaged members would participate in each group.

By comparison, the various goal-oriented theories do offer explanations for why the number of APGs has increased in recent years, arguing that they help backbench members to deal with rising policy complexity and to fight back against the concentration of power in the hands of senior leadership of the US Congress and the British Parliament. However, while this argument may still work in the American case, the gradual reassertion of parliamentary influence in the UK in recent years has not been matched by a decline in the number of APGs, but rather their further expansion. The goal-oriented accounts are also overly focused on the ability of APGs to further legislators’ career objectives, ignoring the fact that participation in many groups seems more likely to distract legislators from those pursuing those goals, not to help with their achievement.

Despite their flaws, however, the three theories also draw attention to factors that must be considered when attempting to develop a broader theory of APG growth. The information-exchange model in particular underscores the role of “legislative subsidies” from external partners in allowing groups to operate while placing few if any demands on the resources of the general legislative membership. They also distinguish between general members and group leaders, highlighting the greater time commitment and engagement required by the latter. In a similar vein, the social network theory suggests that the factors shaping participation in APGs may vary based on a legislators’ career stage, electoral vulnerability, or other factors. In contrast, the various goal-oriented accounts of APG expansion stress the importance of examining APG growth not only within the legislatures in which they operate, but also the broader political system. In this conception, the development of APGs cannot be separated from an analysis of the relationships between front and backbench politicians, legislatures and governments, politicians and the media, citizens and their representatives, and the members of competing parties.
Ultimately, a comprehensive theory to explain the growth and operation of APGs across jurisdictions must account for why APGs form, and why the rate of group formation has increased in recent years. It must also capture not only the factors motivating participation by legislators, but also involvement by the outside actors who support group activities. However, it is not sufficient only to explain what benefits those involved with APGs receive from their participation. Instead, it is necessary to examine why both legislators and external actors choose to become involved with an APG in the first place, and how they understand their participation relative to their other activities. Such accounts are likely to vary based on the characteristics of the legislators and external actors themselves, and also based on their level of involvement in a given group (e.g. leaders versus regular members; secretariat sponsors versus occasional donors).

In addition, a comprehensive theory of APG growth must look at the contextual factors in each jurisdiction that either facilitate or inhibit APG expansion. A comparative approach is essential in this regard as several of the factors that Hammond (1998) identified as being essential for the emergence of APGs at the US Congress are largely absent in the Westminster context. At the same time, however, a theory explaining APG growth across jurisdictions must also recognize that the factors driving APG expansion may themselves vary somewhat between legislatures based on the broader institutional and political context. Ringe et al. (2013) noted this possibility with their observation that APGs at the European Parliament feature more political coordination than their American counterparts, and their finding that APGs are more common in jurisdictions with majoritarian electoral systems. However, these insights were not incorporated into their information-exchange model.
CHAPTER 4
THE ACTIVITIES AND FUNCTIONS OF APGS

1 Introduction

The previous chapter laid out the various elements necessary for the development of a comprehensive theory that can explain the growth of APGs across jurisdictions. This chapter takes the first step towards developing that theory by detailing the activities and functions performed by APGs in the four case study jurisdictions.

APGs perform a large number of different activities, ranging from operating email lists and conducting inquiries to international travel and holding awards ceremonies. These diverse activities in turn allow APGs to perform a number of functions within the legislature and the broader political systems in which they operate. Many of the activities, such as information exchange, political coordination, parliamentary diplomacy, and signaling to constituents, have been documented in past research (e.g. Hammond, 1998; Jones, 1990; Morgan, 1979; Ringe et al., 2013). However, the APGs encountered in this research also displayed a number of others, including symbolic representation, the development of policy networks, regional representation, event coordination and planning, and the resolution of problems for citizens.

In the remainder of the chapter each activity is presented with its most directly associated function, but in practice each could have several impacts. For instance, an international delegation organized by an inter-country APG could result in the exchange of information, symbolic representation, and the achievement of diplomatic objectives. Although most of the activities and functions detailed below were observed in more than one jurisdiction, there were also substantial differences in their prevalence. Not surprisingly given the vastly different number of groups in operation, APGs in the UK had the greatest diversity of behaviours, while Ontario had the least. Curiously, APGs in Scotland were the most uniform, with most engaging in the same basic task of providing a forum for information exchange and political coordination. Differences across jurisdictions are noted wherever possible.
In keeping with past studies from other jurisdictions (e.g. Ringe et al., 2013), APGs were found that engaged in only in some activities, but not others. In certain cases this was a deliberate decision, with disagreements over policy leading some groups, like Canada’s *All-Party Climate Change Caucus*, to choose to limit themselves to information sharing than advocacy. For other APGs, however, focusing solely on certain activities resulted from a lack of resources or from the absence of policy activity in their areas of focus. For instance, many inter-country APGs concentrate less on policy development in favour of symbolic activities like organizing or attending national day celebrations. In contrast with Ringe et al. (2013), however, this study concludes that the most basic function performed by APGs is simply to exist, since the mere presence a group provides a measure of symbolic representation to those affected by or interested in its area of focus even if the group itself remains largely inactive.

2 Relationship building and information exchange

In their study of APGs at the US Congress and the European Parliament, Ringe et al. (2013) argue that facilitating the acquisition and exchange of information is the most important task undertaken by APGs. While overstating the case, they are nonetheless right to highlight the significance APGs’ information exchange function. As they point out, not only does it shape decisions by affecting the information available to legislators, but it also provide the basis for more advanced functions like coalition building.

Past research from the US, EU, and UK has found that APGs facilitate the exchange of information along two major axes (Morgan, 1979; Ringe et al., 2013). First, they can help to overcome the barriers created by parties, committee assignments, and legislative chambers, enabling information to flow more freely between those legislators in each jurisdiction with an interest in a particular policy question. Second they can help these legislators to exchange ideas and political intelligence with external actors.

Across all four cases, the respondents highlighted information exchange as one of the major functions performed by APGs. In practice though, these exchanges take place through a range of activities, including group meetings and events, travel by parliamentarians, or regular newsletters. The sharing of information also requires the development of relationships among legislators themselves, and between legislators and external actors.
2.1 Development of policy networks

A precondition of information acquisition and exchange beyond parliamentarians themselves is the development and maintenance of ties between group members and external stakeholders. Oftentimes this function is facilitated by the organizations that provide APG secretariats, many of which are themselves umbrella bodies for stakeholders in a given sector. For instance, Co-operatives and Mutuals Canada, an industry association for the co-operative sector, provides the secretariat for the Canadian Parliament’s All-Party Cooperatives Caucus, while the Cement Association of Canada serves as the secretariat for Ontario’s Cement Caucus. Ties with stakeholders can also come through parliamentarians’ personal or professional experience, a reality that is particularly evident among groups led by members of the British House of Lords. A perfect example is Baroness Morgan of Drefelin, who for several years was simultaneously the Executive Director of the charity Breast Cancer Campaign and the chair of the APPG on Breast Cancer.

As noted by Ringe et al. (2013), in addition to developing ties between the APGs and external actors, the groups also bring the external stakeholders in a given field into contact with each other. This function is most clearly visible in Scotland, where APG meetings and even group membership is open to government departments and agencies, civil society actors, and private sector organizations that are active on each issue. In this setting, group meetings lead to information sharing among external partners both through formal discussions, as well as informal talks before and after each gathering.

Parliamentarians across the four cases also stressed that APGs helped them to build ties with members from other parties and, in the case of the case of the UK and Canada, between parliamentary chambers. Indeed, one member of the Lords noted that there are very few forums other than APGs where MPs and Peers interact – even those from the same party (confidential interview, November 2012). Parliamentarians also noted that the contacts made through APGs often proved useful in other settings, with all-party caucuses helping them to identify those they could “work with” on other issues (confidential interview, November 2013).
2.2 Meetings and events

Meetings are one of the most common activities undertaken by APGs and can take several forms. Some are annual general meetings (AGMs), where group members elect officers and review financial statements. Others are briefing sessions, where external representatives speak to parliamentarians on a given topic. Many are receptions, held to celebrate particular persons or occasions. APGs may also conduct inquiry sessions, which, as described below, can resemble the meetings of parliamentary committees. The number of meetings held varies greatly from group to group and between jurisdictions. Some in Canada may go over a year without meeting. Others, such as the UK’s All-Party Parliamentary Health Group, are highly active, with events taking place every few weeks. Still others may be mostly dormant, but will then hold a rapid series of meetings or events should an issue of concern present itself, a trend also evident at the US Congress and European Parliament (Hammond, 1998; Ringe et al., 2013).

To stay registered, APGs in the UK and Scotland must have at least two meetings per year, including an AGM. The officially recognized inter-country groups at the Canadian Parliament are also required to hold AGMs as well, but no other rules exist concerning group meetings in either Canada or Ontario. Most of Canada’s unrecognized inter-country groups attempt to mimic their officially recognized counterparts and so hold AGMs as well. Without defined constitutions, memberships or elected executives, the majority of the subject groups in Canada and Ontario have no need for such meetings and so focus entirely on briefings or other events.

Echoing their counterparts at the US Congress and the European Parliament (Ringe et al., 2013), respondents in each jurisdiction stressed that the intense pressure on parliamentarians’ time made it difficult to schedule group meetings. The problem is particularly pronounced in the UK, where there may be dozens of group meetings on any given week. Yet despite Holyrood’s smaller size and lower number of APGs, MSPs and external stakeholders raised similar complaints. The Scottish Parliament typically sits only three days a week from Tuesday to Thursday, meaning that meetings are held Tuesday or Wednesday nights to maximize attendance. Scheduling is also challenging since many MSPs and external stakeholders are members of multiple groups. In both Canada and the UK, MPs complained that APGs chaired by Senators or Peers planned group meetings around their own schedules without considering the dynamics of the other chamber.
Whenever they may be scheduled, APG meetings frequently take place alongside regular parliamentary business as well as the many briefings and receptions put on by external groups. As a result attendance at groups meetings by parliamentarians is regularly quite poor in all jurisdictions, with just the chair and a perhaps few other parliamentarians being present, many of whom will only attend for part of a given event. Indeed, while some may send staff in their place, turnout by parliamentarians is low enough that groups often struggle to reach the required quorum, which is five legislators in the UK and two in Scotland.

Legislators in all jurisdictions are more likely to attend meetings held directly on the parliamentary grounds. The most prized venues are those conveniently located near the debating chambers or committee rooms so that parliamentarians can quickly attend APG activities between their other commitments. In Canada, this means the Centre Block of the Parliament, with the Speaker of the Commons’ dining room (located directly behind the Commons Chamber) appearing to be the most sought after venue. At Westminster, holding events in the Houses of Parliament was preferable to Portcullis House, which is the secondary block of meeting rooms and offices located across the street from the main buildings.

In keeping with past research (Ringe et al., 2013), both the parliamentarians and external representatives interviewed stressed the need for APGs to offer food or refreshments so that politicians could attend during a meal break. Doing so also increased the chances that a politician or staffer would come for the food, but then be exposed to the information presented. Knowing this, APGs often planned their events around a breakfast, lunch, light dinner, or evening reception – a reality which increases the need for an external sponsor to pay for food and drinks. In some cases the food itself is incorporated into the message for the event, with Canada’s All-Party Oceans Caucus and the International Conservation Caucus making a point of offering sustainably-sourced seafood at their events. The various inter-country groups likewise typically feature food and drink from the partner country.

While travel is a focus for some inter-country groups, a lack funding means that many are limited to local events, such as briefings by that country’s embassy or consulate, meetings with visiting delegations, or receptions for symbolic occasions. These events may be planned by the groups themselves, but often are organized either by diplomats from the partner country or their own governments. Indeed, several parliamentarians interviewed spoke of how Britain’s Foreign
and Commonwealth Office or Global Affairs Canada would call upon inter-country groups to entertain visiting dignitaries.

Perceptions of a “good” level of attendance at meetings ranged between the cases. In Scotland, MSP turnout is generally quite low, with the Standards Committee repeatedly hearing complaints that APGs were failing to meet the quorum of two MSPs. Those interviewed indicated that Scottish APGs were doing quite well if four or more MSPs attended a meeting. Indeed even the annual tasting night put on by Holyrood’s *CPG on Scotch Whisky* attracted just five MSPs in 2015. In the UK, respondents said a typical attendance was around six parliamentarians, with 10 or more being impressive. Several respondents said that attendance by Peers is often higher and more consistent than that of MPs, a fact typically attributed to their lesser workload. Canadian respondents gave slightly higher figures, with typical attendance of five to seven parliamentarians and 10 to 12 being seen as good.

While the figures for each jurisdiction may seem somewhat low, if anything they may overstate the level of engagement by parliamentarians given that many will often attend only for a few minutes of a given meeting. For instance, in my own fieldwork, all three meetings I attended in Edinburgh began with at least two MSPs, but early departures meant that two had just a single MSP present for considerable portions of the meetings. In the UK, the inquiry session I observed had just four MPs and Peers present, two of whom left well before the end. This observations match those by Ringe et al. (2013) from the US Congress. In contrast, the two APG meetings I went to in Ottawa each had over a dozen parliamentarians present, many of whom stayed throughout most of the events. This greater turnout may reflect the lower APG prevalence at the Canadian Parliament, although both meetings also featured hot catered meals, while the Scottish and British meetings had only light refreshments. That said, the meetings of the *All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity* that I attended while working at the Canadian parliament between 2006 and 2008 typically had eight to ten parliamentarians present even if no hot meals were served.

Given the time and effort required to organize APG meetings and events, several external stakeholders expressed frustration with the low levels of attendance. Parliamentarians in the UK and Scotland stated that they were more likely to attend meetings that featured interesting topics, high profile speakers, or sessions with a government minister. In this vein, group chairs reported
trying to ensure that all of their group meetings, even AGMs, also featured presentations from outside stakeholders or experts. Nevertheless, one civil society representative lamented that there were just a handful of parliamentarians who turned out for an APG meeting with the chair of the National Health Service (NHS) (confidential interview, November 2012). Several parliamentarians interviewed at Westminster and Holyrood also spoke derisively of APGs that were just “talking shops” and did not produce concrete results. To guard against this perception, several British MPs described working to ensure that each had a definite purpose and produced a specific outcome or action, such as an agreement to write to a minister based on the information received. Some MPs also stressed that group meetings should be limited to once every few months to recognize the limits to parliamentarians’ time and to make sure that meetings are action oriented.

Despite these different approaches, however, there is no single solution that guarantees high attendance from parliamentarians. Indeed, the British APPG on Health violates many of the suggestions described above, meeting every few weeks.22 It also does not actually develop policy positions, but rather serves to facilitate information exchange and dialogue about the health systems. Nevertheless, the group’s meetings were generally described as being well attended by MPs and Peers, especially during the debate over the reforms to the NHS advanced by the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition.

Several APGs have also experimented with different event formats in hopes of raising attendance and impact. In Canada, the Health Research Caucus switched to a “kiosk” format with displays on new health research set up in a meeting room for several hours, allowing parliamentarians to drop in when they can, review the information, and speak with stakeholders. Those involved say this approach has led to an increase in attendance and reduced frustration among parliamentarians who might otherwise have walked in part way through an expert’s presentation.

In contrast to such regular, low-commitment events, the British APPG on Cancer instead puts much of its effort into a full day annual conference, known as “Britain Against Cancer,” that brings together senior members of the executive, backbench parliamentarians, health care...

22 Prior to the elimination of the associate parliamentary groups in 2014, the group was known as the Associate Parliamentary Health Group
workers, patients, academics, and other stakeholders. It typically features an opening address from the Health Minister and a day of workshops and panel discussions. The APPG also uses the event to launch its latest report. One parliamentarian described Britain Against Cancer as highly influential since it brings together such a wide range of participants in direct dialogue with ministers (confidential interview, October 2012). The CPG on Cancer at the Scottish Parliament has also emulated the format, hosting the predictably named “Scotland Against Cancer” every other year. Both the British and Scottish APGs on Cancer have extensive financial and secretarial support from external partners that makes it possible for them to operate such large scale events.

Attendance at APG events among external stakeholders was hugely variable both between groups and across jurisdictions. APGs in Scotland tended to have large numbers of external stakeholders present at group meetings, with MSPs almost always outnumbered – at times vastly so – by non-parliamentarians. The only formal limitation on participation by members of the public is that those wishing to attend APG meetings at Holyrood are supposed to RSVP beforehand so that they can be added to the list of attendees given to the Parliament’s security officers.

Some meetings of British APGs are similar to those at Holyrood, with substantial numbers of external representatives present. However, these organizations have often paid to become “members” of the group or are connected to the body that provides its secretariat. Group meetings at Westminster are seldom publicized beyond the parliamentarians and those stakeholders already connected to an APG, making it difficult for other outside actors or members of the public to become involved. Moreover, even those meetings that are publicized typically take place within the parliamentary precinct, meaning that anyone who wishes to attend must be placed on the security list. In general, it is unlikely that individuals will be able to attend APG meetings at Westminster without being affiliated with an organization or business that already linked to the group. Instead, the external actors who operate group secretariats often control access to the meetings, bringing in their members or experts at different times to present to the parliamentary members.

APG meetings in Canada appear to mirror those in the UK. Few groups publicize their gatherings, and when they do a prior RSVP is necessary. Groups may use this requirement to
control who can attend their meetings, as I discovered when my request to attend one event was rejected by the organizers. Some APGs do regularly invite external stakeholders to attend group meetings. However, others make a point of meeting in private in order to foster a more open discussion among parliamentarians. A case in point is the All-Party Climate Change Caucus, which Green Party leader Elizabeth May described the as a “safe space” for politicians to raise their questions (De Souza, 2013). Such an approach reflects the fact that many parliamentarians find it difficult to be fully open around members of the public and around each other. As one Canadian lobbyist noted, some parliamentarians are reluctant to ask questions group meetings for fear of exposing a gap in their knowledge to members of other parties (confidential interview, November 2013). Secrecy can also be important for groups on controversial topics. For their part, group meetings in Ontario appear to be solely the preserve of MPPs and the organizations providing the group secretariats.

2.3 Travel

Although primarily the purview of inter-country groups, virtually any APG may engage in travel as a way to acquire or exchange information. However, travel is often one of the more controversial activities undertaken by APGs as the costs are typically paid by outside actors, a reality that can open groups and individual legislators to allegations of bias or corruption.

Travel to other jurisdictions and the hosting of incoming parliamentary delegations is the primary means of information exchange for the fully funded inter-country groups at the Canadian Parliament. The bilateral associations, such as the Canada-Japan Interparliamentary Group, generally alternate exchanges with the parliamentarians from the partner jurisdiction on an annual or biannual basis. Legislators use these visits to discuss matters of common concern and to meet with government officials, business leaders, or other stakeholders interested in the bilateral relationship. The British-American Parliamentary Group, which is the sole APG in the UK that receives parliamentary funding, also operates a similar program of exchanges.

As could be expected, the main activity of those funded Canadian APGs that manage participation in interparliamentary associations is to attend those bodies’ regular meetings and assemblies. As such, they do not receive incoming delegations unless they are hosting an international meeting, as happened when Canada hosted the 127th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Quebec in 2012. The one exception is the Commonwealth Parliamentary
Association, which also holds an annual regional conference of the organization’s 14 Canadian chapters (i.e. those of the federal parliament and each provincial and territorial legislature). This unique gathering is the only regular meeting of federal and provincial legislators (Levy, 1985).

All other inter-country groups in Canada, the UK and Scotland can only engage in travel if the members pay for it themselves or they receive external support. However, the amount of external funding available varies greatly depending on the partner country. In Canada, the Canada-Israel and Canada-Taiwan friendship groups have ready access to support from diasporic advocacy groups and the partner governments themselves (Hulme, 2010; Thompson, 2014). Indeed, between 2005 and 2013 there were 116 Canadian MPs who accepted travel to Israel alone, with a combined cost of over $1 million paid by lobby groups (Thompson, 2014). In addition, Canadian MPs have also received assistance to visit other many countries, such as Armenia, India, Palestine, and Turkey. Members of those APGs for less wealthy countries (or those with less wealthy diasporic communities) will often reach an arrangement whereby their in-country costs will be covered by the host country if the parliamentarians pay for their initial flights. Limited funding also means that oftentimes only the chair or a small group of parliamentarians will take part in any particular trip.

The situation for travel by members of inter-country groups is much the same in the UK. An analysis by The Independent newspaper found that MPs received over £1.5 million in external funding for foreign travel in the two years leading up to November 2012 (Wright and Macaulay, 2012). While also capturing other travel, much was related to APGs. The article highlighted trips undertaken by MPs who served on the executives for the APPGs on Azerbaijan, China, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, and Turks and Caicos. Further declarations of travel support can also be found on the APPG registry. For instance, the August 2014 registry included such declarations by the APPGs on Algeria, Egypt, Iraqi Kurdistan, Palestine, and the United Arab Emirates. This lack of a consistent system of reporting makes it difficult to identify all of the external support for travel offered to British APPGs.

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Though the article highlighted the travel undertaken by the individual MPs to the countries in question, it did not always mention the positions they held within each group.
Unlike Canada and the UK, overseas travel is not common among inter-country APGs in Scotland, though it still occurs on a limited scale. A case in point was when MSP Hanzala Malik, Convener of the CPG on the Middle East, joined a group British MPs from the APPG on Iraqi Kurdistan on a trip to that region in 2012 ("Scottish MP joins UK parliamentary delegation to Kurdistan," 2012). The delegation was paid for by Kurdistan Regional Government.

Subject APGs in the jurisdictions studied also have a long tradition of traveling both domestically and internationally to gather information on how a given industry operates or to see what policy options have been adopted in other jurisdictions. Nearly 60 years ago Finer (1958b) described how lobbyists had taken members of the British All-Party Roads Study Group to observe the highways being developed in France and Belgium. A more recent example occurred in 2013 when the Government of Taiwan paid for the APPG on Light Rail to visit the country on a seven day fact-finding mission (United Kingdom. Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, 2014). Likewise, in 2007 members of the Canadian All-Party Steel Caucus visited steel manufacturing facilities in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario to see new manufacturing technologies and to meet with factory management and workers (Martin, 2007). In 2013, the Canadian Aerospace Caucus also visited the industry hubs located in Montreal, Toronto, and Winnipeg (Cash, 2013; Hamilton-McCharles, 2013). Such site visits are also conducted by APGs in Scotland as well, as when the CPG on Nuclear Energy toured a reactor owned by British Energy (Hutcheon, 2006b).

Members of subject APGs may also travel to meet with foreign politicians or attend international conferences, an activity that is particularly common among those APGs that are chapters of international networks. In 2014, MPs Hedy Fry and Mylène Freeman represented the Canadian Association of Parliamentarians for Population and Development at the sixth International Conference of Parliamentarians on Population and Development in Sweden. Members of the British APPG for Population, Development and Reproductive Health also attended the conference, and regularly travel within Europe for meetings of the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (United Kingdom. Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, 2014). Such travel can also occur without the presence of a formal association. For instance, the members of the Canadian Parliamentary Steel Caucus have repeatedly traveled to Washington for meetings with their Congressional counterparts (Parliamentary Centre, 2003).
Besides meeting with those in other jurisdictions, several Canadian respondents and one of those from Ontario also noted that one of the primary benefits of such travel was to give parliamentarians an opportunity to meet each other. In particular, the respondents stressed that travel through APGs helped to break down partisan tensions by forcing members from different parties to spend time together in casual settings:

> It's quite a different thing when the person who is your opponent, say at a committee or in the House, now all of a sudden is on a plane with you and you’re sitting down and having lunch or dinner with them… Gone then is this sort of antipathy that you see between the Members. It gives them a chance to get to know one another a little more and also share some things (Canadian Senator, December 2013).

> So if we can sit down and as we break bread we can just do the small talk, we can talk to get to know each other. It’s like when you find out that somebody’s got, you know, four kids and three grandchildren and two of them play hockey and they – you get to know them a little better. Sometimes you can pull the fangs in (Ontario MPP, March 2011).

Once established, these relationships can facilitate cooperation between parliamentarians in other legislative activities as well. In this way, travel through APGs in Canada and Ontario can help to compensate for the loss of similar cross-party connections that used to be formed during travel by formal parliamentary committees, but which have declined as travel budgets have been reduced in recent years. One Canadian Senator also noted that international travel is one of the few methods for allowing connections to be forged between the two houses of Parliament.

### 2.4 Email lists and newsletters

In keeping with Ringe et al.’s (2013) findings from the US and EU, many APGs also maintain email lists for distributing information to their members. Some may simply serve as conduits for forwarding information from external partners, but other groups distribute regular briefings or newsletters. A prime example is the Canadian *All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity*, which circulates a weekly briefing on situations of concern around the world. In the UK, the *APPG on Smoking and Health* produces a bi-annual “Political Briefing” for members to highlight issues of concerns and ongoing legislative action. However, perhaps the most elaborate APG newsletter is the *Science in Parliament* journal, a 60-odd page magazine published twice per year by the *Parliamentary and Scientific Committee* at the British Parliament. Many APGs also further facilitate information
sharing through webpages where they post group news, documents, and details about upcoming events.

Given the pressure on their time, several of the parliamentarians interviewed reported becoming “members” of one APG or another only solely to receive information or newsletters without having any intention of being regularly involved in its activities. This trend is not new, at least in the UK, with Judge writing over 25 years ago that “The problem of time many backbenchers resolve simply by not attending all party meetings but continuing to receive group briefing material. Membership thus tends to distill into a hard-core of active specialists” (1990: 211). Ringe et al. (2013) also report similar patterns of involvement at the US Congress and the EU. Recognizing this fact, the new rules for British APGs adopted in 2015 state that “an active member is one who has asked to be on the group’s mailing list” (United Kingdom. Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, 2015a).

3 Scrutiny, policy development, and advocacy

As discussed further in the next chapter, the threat of partisan conflict forces some APGs to limit themselves solely to information exchange. However, there are a substantial number of groups across the four cases that actively scrutinize government initiatives, develop policy suggestions, and engage in legislative advocacy. While they can occur separately, these activities are often tightly interwoven, with inquiries being used not only to review the government’s performance, define policy problems, and make recommendations for future actions, but also as a platform for raising the profile of an issue both within the legislature and the broader public. Once developed, APGs pressure governments to adopt their policy suggestions, and in doing so often appear much like internal lobby groups. Quite often such appearances are not accidental. Indeed, the external lobby groups that support and partner with APGs often play a major role in both developing policy proposals and working with legislators to lobby for their adoption.

It should also be noted that the advocacy conducted by APGs is not always – or at least not exclusively – targeted towards their own governments. Given that many APGs deal with complex, cross-cutting policy issues, the solutions they propose frequently require action by a range of stakeholders, including national and local governments, businesses, and civil society groups. While government action or legislation may at times be able to change the behaviour of external actors, APGs must often find ways to engage with external actors directly.
3.1 Reports, inquiries, and manifestos

Reports by APGs seek to draw attention to particular issues and advance policy proposals. While not necessarily criticizing government policies, the reports issued by APGs are almost always political in that they urge the government to enact new policies or legislation, or to change those already on the books. As such, they are not always welcomed by ministers or civil servants. One strategy that groups have adopted to avoid the perception of being overly critical towards the government is through the development of “manifestos” that call upon all political parties to adopt a set of initiatives as part of their platforms for the next general election. This tactic has become increasingly popular in the UK in recent years, with the APGs producing manifestos ahead of the 2015 election including those on Alcohol Misuse, Conception to Age 2 – The First 1001 Days, Dementia, Manufacturing, Modern Languages, Social Mobility, and Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire. Generally speaking the documents were fairly short and focused primarily on policy recommendations.

APG reports are usually developed in conjunction with partner organization(s), and these actors typically cover the cost of production and printing as well. The documents themselves vary greatly in scope and complexity: some are only a few pages long, others reach into the hundreds of pages; some are based on parliamentary-style inquiries or site visits, others are drafted by group members or their external partners with little public input. They also differ greatly in terms of production quality: some are professionally designed and printed; others are little more than hastily prepared Microsoft Word documents.

No matter the length or quality, however, the media and the public in all jurisdictions often fail to distinguish APG reports from those issued by the formal parliamentary committees. Instead, phrases such as “an-all party committee,” “a committee of MPs,” a “cross-party committee,” or “a parliamentary committee” are regularly used in media articles on reports issued by bodies of both types. This ambiguity causes great frustration for members of formal parliamentary committees, who feel that APGs are treading on their legitimacy (Straw et al., 2012)

While less common in other jurisdictions, the production and publication of reports has become a major activity for APGs in the UK. Dozens of British APPGs issue reports each year, and some may produce several. Table 4.1 provides a sample of the many of reports by British APGs published in 2012 alone and demonstrates the wide range of topics covered.
While largely the domain of subject APGs, some inter-country groups in the UK may also issue reports. For instance, the *APPG on Africa* regularly publishes reports on issues such as international security, corruption, and democratic development on the continent. Likewise, the *APPG on Nigeria* has produced a series of reports on the country’s democratic development and respect for human rights based on fact-finding missions to the country (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Nigeria, 2012, 2013).

Over the past decade, the process of report production has become increasingly elaborate, with many British APGs now conducting “inquiries” similar to those undertaken by parliamentary committees to hear from witnesses and gather policy ideas. In some instances the government has responded to these APG reports as it would to those by select committees. This trend has only worsened the confusion between committee and APG reports.

**Table 4.1 – Sample of reports published by British APGs in 2012**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group(s)</th>
<th>Report Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ageing and older people</td>
<td>Older savers report: the impact on older people of savings accounts where interest rates have dropped from their initial rate to negligible amounts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aviation</td>
<td>Inquiry into Aviation Policy and Air Passenger Duty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Image</td>
<td>Reflections on Body Image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancer</td>
<td>Effective Cancer Commissioning in the New NHS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Children and Recession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellence in the Built Environment</td>
<td>A Better Deal For Public Building: Report from the Commission of Inquiry into achieving best value in the procurement of construction work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Education for Young People</td>
<td>Financial Education in Further Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Speed Rail</td>
<td>Report of the Inquiry into Britain’s Rail Capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Care and Public Health</td>
<td>Were massive reforms necessary to save the NHS?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Runaway and Missing Children and Adults; Looked after Children and Care Leavers</td>
<td>Report from the joint inquiry into children who go missing from care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stem Cell Transplantation</td>
<td>Cord blood transplantation: meeting the unmet demand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Resource</td>
<td>Sustainable Skills: The Future of the Sustainable Waste Management Industry</td>
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<td>Vascular Disease</td>
<td>Putting Vascular Disease at the Centre of Government Thinking</td>
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Several respondents indicated that the *APPG on Antisemitism’s* 2006 inquiry into antisemitism in Britain was the first major inquiry conducted by a British APG. To increase transparency, the group struck an inquiry panel of 14 members from all major parties that was separate from the group’s leadership. While the group itself was chaired by MP John Mann, the inquiry was led by the Rt. Hon. Dennis Macshane, a former minister, and included five other former ministers as panel members. Those interviewed indicated that having such senior parliamentarians involved increased the credibility of the process. The inquiry panel proceeded in the same way as a parliamentary committee, issuing a public call for submissions, holding four open evidence sessions with witnesses, and maintaining transcripts of the meetings. All told, the group received input from over 100 organizations, including government departments, civil society bodies, and foreign embassies. The cost involved was covered by external donors, with the funds managed by a separate charitable body called the Parliamentary Committee Against Antisemitism Foundation. The resulting report was widely respected, with the British government first issuing an initial response and then later producing a second document tracking the implementation of the report’s recommendations. The government also asked Mr. Mann to promote the group’s work internationally.24

The report by the *APPG on Antisemitism* served as a model for APGs working on other issues, both in Britain and internationally, demonstrating both the potential impact of APG reports, as well as how the inquiry format itself could improve the uptake of their recommendations. The approach spread quickly, and has now become a standard operating tool for British APGs. Yet while some APGs at Westminster have closely followed the model set out by the Antisemitism inquiry, many others have been less rigorous. Indeed, most of the APG inquiries encountered during the course of this research were directly led by the group chairs, with heavy involvement from partner organizations as well. For instance, at a hearing I attended for the *APPG on Smoking and Health*’s inquiry on tobacco smuggling, the director of the group’s secretariat organization, Action on Smoking and Health, sat among the parliamentarians and participated in the questioning of the witnesses. No transcripts of the proceedings were maintained.

24 In 2008 I attended a meeting between John Mann and Senator Yoine Goldstein, my then employer. The meeting had been arranged by the British High Commission in Ottawa to promote the report of the *APPG on Antisemitism* internationally.
Along with registered APGs, several of the unregistered APGs at Westminster have also undertaken inquiries or produced reports, and some of these groups are established for the sole purpose of conducting such inquiries. The unstructured nature of these groups, which operate outside of the rules for APGs, means that they can vary greatly in terms of engagement by legislators. For instance, the *Independent Parliamentary Inquiry into Online Child Protection* was led by a “core team” of 17 MPs and Peers, and claimed to be supported by over 60 parliamentarians. By comparison, the *Cross-Party Inquiry into Unplanned Pregnancy* was conducted by just three MPs (one from each major party) along with three external representatives from the charity 2020health (Rudd et al., 2013).

Though rare by comparison to the UK, a small number of subject APGs in Canada have also held inquiries into given policy issues. The first was the *All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity’s 2009 inquiry* into the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The group held a series events in Ottawa with experts and stakeholders, and also conducted a field visit to the DRC with support from the Parliamentary Network for the World Bank. The resulting report made 10 recommendations on how to improve Canada’s response to the situation (APPPGPGOCAH 2009). Later the same year, a group of Canadian MPs were inspired by the British *APPG on Antisemitism* to establish the *Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism (CPCCA)* and launch an inquiry into the state of the problem in Canada. Like its British model, the CPCCA struck an inquiry panel that held public hearings between 2009 and 2010 and received over 200 written submissions, with the final report issued in 2011 (CPCCA 2011). However, there were also noticeable differences between the two initiatives. In particular, rather than being fully autonomous, the chair of the Canadian group was an active participant on the inquiry panel. The CPCCA also failed to disclose all of its funding, leading to harsh criticism from the media and academics (Ferguson et al., 2011; Geddes, 2011).

The only other Canadian APG to conduct an inquiry, the The Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care, was also established in the 2008-2011 parliament. No APG in Ottawa appears to have launched an inquiry since the 2011 election – a trend that is somewhat surprising given the continued growth in the number of subject APGs. This decline appears to reflect the reluctance of Canadian APGs to engage in direct policy advocacy, which itself is a product of the greater tensions between the parties in Canada than those at Westminster.
Moreover, while the inquiry by the British *APPG on Antisemitism* served as a model for other groups, the criticism received by the *CPCCA* may have made some parliamentarians reluctant to adopt a similar approach.

On the inter-country side, Canada’s 16 officially recognized APGs must table reports after any international travel. While largely describing the activities undertaken, these documents may also make some gentle recommendations for future government action. For instance, the report of the *Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association* trip to Madagascar in 2014 includes four “considerations” that it “encourages” the government to look at:

- The Government of Canada to consider increasing its support and presence in Madagascar.
- The Government of Canada to engage with the Government of Madagascar and the international community with a view to reversing the decline in human development indicators prompted by years of political instability.
- The Government of Canada and Canadian parliamentarians to consider ways in which they can work with their counterparts in Madagascar to strengthen that country’s parliamentary and democratic institutions.
- The Government of Canada and Canadian businesses to increase engagement with the Government of Madagascar and others in the promotion of socially responsible corporate practices in Madagascar (2014: 21).

Canada’s unrecognized inter-country groups may also prepare reports after international travel, but these documents can only be tabled in Parliament with the unanimous consent of the House – a situation that can lead to conflict as described further in the next chapter.

While the report approach appears to be stalling in Canada, none at all were found from APGs in Ontario. This result was not unexpected given the small number and informal nature of the groups in operation at that legislature. More surprising though was the low rate of report production among the APGs in Scotland. Given that the groups generally serve as open forums for discussions between stakeholders, they would seem to be ideal venues in which to negotiate policy compromises. Yet compared to their counterparts at Westminster, the APGs at Holyrood are much less likely to issue reports or conduct inquiries, with one respondent describing them as “quite rare” (confidential interview, November 2012). The respondent theorized that this aversion to reports may result from the comparatively lower capacity and resource base of Scottish civil society groups. Another posited that it stemmed from the smaller nature of the Scottish Parliament and the greater accessibility of ministers to outside groups. However, as in
Canada, the avoidance of reports would also appear to reflect the greater tensions among the parties at Holyrood and the need for Scottish APGs to avoid being seen as partisan.

All told, only about 20 reports by Scottish APGs were found since the Parliament’s founding in 1999, most of which came from just three groups. The *CPG on Cancer* is the most prolific, producing a regular series of reports summarizing the presentations and policy recommendations made at its “Scotland Against Cancer” conferences. The *CPG on Tibet* also issues periodic briefings on the situation in the region, and the *CPG on Scots Language* has published two reports: a 2003 booklet that laid out 13 principles to guide the Scottish Government’s policy Scots (Cross Pairty Group on the Scots Leid, 2003), and a 2010 report on teachers’ attitudes towards Scots language instruction. The latter was based on a survey 200 teachers and found that while educators were interested in teaching Scots, they lacked the training and support to do so (Education Sub-Committee of the Cross Party Group on the Scots Language, 2010).

Individual reports were also found from a handful of other APGs, some of which were strongly critical towards the government. In 2002, members of the *CPG on Asylum Seekers and Refugees* visited an immigration detention centre and released a report criticizing the holding of child migrants with adult detainees (Malloch and Stanley, 2005). More recently, the *CPG on Muscular Dystrophy* conducted inquiry into access to neuromuscular care services in Scotland, ultimately releasing a report that “emphasises the need for the Scottish Government and NHS Scotland to take urgent action to address the significant gaps and inequalities in the provision of specialist neuromuscular care and social care” (Cross-Party Group on Muscular Dystrophy, 2010). The *CPG on Heart Disease* also published a “Stroke Charter” in 2013 which outlined the standard of care that its members felt that stroke victims should to expect to receive from the Scottish NHS (Cross-Party Group on Heart Disease and Stroke, 2013). However, even on a proportionate basis, there have been far fewer reports produced by Scottish APGs, and very few of those released present serious critiques of government policy.

In terms of strategic considerations, producing reports can require considerable financial and human resources, and the costs rise the more closely an APG seeks to emulate a formal inquiry by a parliamentary committee. Indeed, just producing a report without taking evidence still requires someone to prepare the document, costs for document design and printing, and, in Canada and to a lesser extent Scotland, for translation. A full-fledged inquiry adds further costs.
for transcription services, refreshments at meetings, and (possibly) facility rentals. Without well-
resourced external sponsors, it is nearly impossible for legislators to meet such expenses on their
own. However, perhaps the greatest limitation on reports and inquiries by APGs is the time
constraints faced by parliamentarians and their staff. Scheduling evidence sessions around
parliamentarians’ existing commitments can be very problematic. Several MPs in the UK and
Canada noted that running an inquiry consumed large portions of their time, with one British MP
stating that it took the bulk of his diary for several weeks. Another reported that the publication
of a report resulted in a large time commitment for media interviews. While these activities may
help to generate publicity for MPs, they still compete with MPs’ existing duties and the pressure
to respond to constituents.

Despite these costs, APG reports serve several purposes. First, the production of reports is a
manifestation of the policy coordination function described by Hammond (1998) and Ringe et al.
(2013). The act of producing reports requires APGs to go through the processes of problem
definition, evidence gathering, and the development of mutually agreeable recommendations.
However, the scope of the coordination will obviously vary with the number of actors involved.
APGs therefore face a series of trade-offs. The more actors are involved in the development of a
report, the more legitimacy its findings are likely to be given. Yet the more actors who are
involved, the more challenging it can be for APGs to reach a consensus, and the more expensive
and/or time consuming the report production can become.

Second, reports provide tools APGs can use in their engagement with the government or other
actors. Reports can be brought to meetings, sent to decision makers, and posted online, enabling
APGs to extend their reach beyond those who attend group events, and allowing them to make
their case more thoroughly than would be possible in brief meetings. Producing a report can also
increase the influence of an APG by demonstrating to policymakers that group members have
invested time in building policy expertise and connections with civil society. Third, preparing
and releasing a report can be a useful way for parliamentarians to raise the profile of a given
issue. APGs often issue press advisories advertising inquiry sessions or the publication of a
report, enabling them to garner media attention. Parliamentarians may also speak on new reports
in their respective legislative chambers to raise awareness among their colleagues.
Finally, by mimicking formal parliamentary committees, holding of inquiries and producing reports allows APGs to wrap their policy recommendations in the legitimacy of the parliament itself. APGs typically design their reports to look like official parliamentary documents. In the UK, this involves using the parliamentary emblem, the Crowned Portcullis, on the cover of the document, while in Canada, reports typically feature the Canadian coat of arms. Figure 4.1 compares the cover of a Canadian APG report with that from a House of Commons Standing Committee, while Figure 4.2 compares report covers from a British APG and a UK Commons Select Committee. Someone unfamiliar with the distinction between an APG and a parliamentary committee could easily confuse the documents. Indeed, reports from British APGs often have higher production values than those issued by formal committees.

**Figure 4.1 – Report covers from a Canadian APG and Commons Standing Committee**
Figure 4.2 – Report covers from a British APG and UK Commons Select Committee

Figure 4.3 – UK APG report cover showing APG “branded” Crowned Portcullis and disclaimer
As noted in Chapter Two, following years of complaints over confusion between APGs and select committees reports, the Select Committee on Standards (2013) issued new rules that ban the use of the standard Crowned Portcullis on group reports. Instead, APGs now must use a “bespoke” version of the Crowned Portcullis like that depicted on the report in Figure 4.3 (United Kingdom. Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, 2015a). Reports by British APGs now must also carry a disclaimer indicating that the document is not an official parliamentary publication (also visible in Figure 4.3). However, some reports issued after the new rules took effect, like that issued by the APPG on Mindfulness (2015), ignored both changes. By comparison Scottish APGs were barred from using that Parliament’s logo in 2007.

3.2 Letters and meetings with Ministers

While they have certain benefits, there are many times when APGs must respond quickly to emerging issues or address specific policy questions that may not lend themselves to reports or inquiries. In these cases, groups may instead draft letters to ministers or seek to speak with them directly to advocate for a particular policy change. Such tactics may also be employed by APGs that lack the resources to conduct an inquiry, those seeking to avoid public criticism of the government, or by groups that have produced report and wish to draw ministers’ attention to their findings.

Among parliamentarians at the British Parliament, writing to or meeting with ministers was the most commonly cited strategy for influencing policy outcomes. APGs may invite ministers to attend group meetings to engage with members directly. For instance, the APPG on Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire held a series of meetings where it invited ministers to discuss different policy issues in the region. At other times, APG members will seek to meet with ministers in private to discuss topics that may be more politically sensitive. This occurred in 2012 when the chairs of several APGs that dealt with neurological issues met with a minister to express concerns with the government’s proposed changes to welfare benefits (confidential interview, November 2012). One chair of an active health APG stressed that groups were more likely to get a positive response to their demands if they first raised matters privately through letters or meetings rather than “just spring it on the Minister on the floor of the House” (confidential interview, April 2013). Another noted that over time trust can be built up between APGs and ministers such that ministers may consult with APG chairs before introducing new
policy initiatives (confidential interview, November 2012). Such relationships between ministers and APG have existed for some time, with several of the MPs interviewed by Morgan (1979) claiming that ministers at times sought out APGs’ expertise and saw the groups as “allies” in their own efforts to have new policies approved by the Treasury. British APGs may also submit briefs to government consultations on new policy initiatives or to standing committee inquiries.

Direct contact with ministers is also a major tool for APGs at Holyrood. Ministers are regularly invited to group meetings to share information, and groups often make a point of trying to meet with new ministers to ensure they are aware of the importance of their particular issues. The external members on CPGs particularly enjoy the opportunity to engage directly with ministers. Such meetings are typically cordial, but one former Minister described being “grilled” on the implementation of a new policy shortly after taking up his position (confidential interview, November 2012). The convenors of APGs in Scotland also frequently write to ministers to highlight matters of concern. While less common, Scottish ministers may also seek to meet with APGs to solicit input on new legislative or policy proposals. One former minister described APGs as a useful tool for keeping up to date on an issue: “when I was the… minister, I went along to quite a few of the related CPGs. Not always to present, sometimes just to sit and listen… but I felt it kept me in touch” (confidential interview, November 2012). Scottish civil servants may also attend APG meetings to keep ministers informed on their discussions.

In Canada, ministers are less likely to directly engage in policy discussions with APGs. While I observed the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans in attendance at an information session put by the All-Party Oceans Caucus in 2014, the Minister did not speak as part of the event. Moreover, even when ministers do address group members, it may not be overly productive. Speaking about the All-Party Women’s Caucus, an opposition member lamented that ministers were not interested in interacting with group members: “a cabinet Minister would come and speak to a specific item and then leave, so it became a showcase for government policy” (confidential interview, April 2013). However, like their counterparts at Westminster and Holyrood, Canadian APGs do write to ministers to draw their attention to issues of concern. For instance, the All-Party Sugar Caucus passed a unanimous resolution calling for the government to use the provisions of the North American Free Trade Agreement to take stronger action in challenging tariffs imposed on Canadian sugar by the United States (Wayne, 1996). Likewise, in 2005 the Steel Caucus wrote to Industry Minister David Emerson urging him to ensure that a greater
priority was given to wages owed to workers during bankruptcy proceedings (Francoli, 2005). More recently, the All-Party Anti-Poverty Caucus agreed to write to the Minister of Finance to support the idea of a working income tax benefit (confidential interview, December 2013).

3.3 Legislative activity

Rather than just making recommendations for government action, many APGs use the legislative tools at their disposal to raise awareness about their proposed policy changes, or even to pursue direct legislative action. APGs in the UK have long made use of Early Day Motions (EDMs), which are officially motions for a debate in the House of Commons, though few are actually debated. Instead, EDMs allow MPs to “draw the attention of the House to a particular, issue, event or campaign” (United Kingdom. Parliament, 2015a). It particular, MPs can endorse each motion put forward, allowing EDMs to serve as a barometer for the opinion in the chamber on a given subject. The advantage of EDMs is that they can be introduced at any point in the legislative cycle with very little effort. However, these advantages also mean that thousands of EDMs are introduced in each session, making it hard for any one motion to stand out.

The use of EDMs by British APGs was noted as far back as early 1970s, with Richardson and Kimber (1971) describing how the APPG on the Third London Airport tabled a motion expressing opposition to the government’s plan to construct a new airport at Wing in Buckinghamshire. The motions introduced during the study period varied greatly in their focus, with some simply pointing out the creation of a new group. A case in point is EDM 2725 of the 2010-2012 parliamentary session, which moved “That this House welcomes the launch of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Social Work; and notes the huge contribution social workers make to society often in very difficult circumstances” (United Kingdom. Parliament, 2012). The motion attracted 31 sponsors. In contrast, the APPG on Cycling used an EDM for direct policy advocacy, with the text calling on the House to support the findings of its inquiry into British cycling policy, and specifically for the government to create a national cycling plan (United Kingdom. Parliament, 2013). The motion (EDM 679 of session 2012-2013) went on to be signed by 138 MPs – over a fifth of the Commons. However, in many cases EDMs are developed by APGs, but fail to make reference to the group in the text of the motion. For instance, as of late 2015 the APPG on Drones had put forward four separate EDMs calling for new government
British APGs have also made use of the debating time available through the “Westminster Hall” debates and the Backbench Business Committee. Westminster Hall is a parallel debating chamber to the House of Commons, with debates occurring simultaneously with those in the House itself (United Kingdom. Parliament, 2015b). Proceedings in Westminster Hall are “general debates” on a given topic, with no substantive motion and no votes. However, a minister will attend the proceedings and respond to the points made (Norton, 2013). Up to five debates of 90 minutes each are held each Tuesday and Wednesday. The topics are determined based on a ballot of proposals submitted by backbenchers to the Speaker’s Office.

The Backbench Business Committee was created in 2010 as part of the “Wright Reforms,” which sought to restore the influence of the House of Commons (Foster, 2015). The committee controls a portion of the debating time in the main chamber, as well as the debates in Westminster Hall on Tuesday morning and Thursday afternoon. To secure a backbench business debate, MPs must defend their proposals at a meeting of the committee, a process that one respondent compared to the reality TV show Dragon’s Den (confidential interview, October 2012). The backbench business debates that take place in Westminster Hall do so under the usual rules for the chamber, with no votes taken. However, the Backbench debates in the main Commons Chamber can be devoted to either “general debates,” like those in Westminster Hall, or to debates on substantive, votable motions.

APGs frequently take advantage of both Westminster Hall and backbench business debates to draw attention to particular issues or to their recent reports, as can be seen with the example of the APPG on Cycling. In February 2012, the group secured a backbench business slot in Westminster Hall for a debate on the recommendations in The Times “Cities fit for Cycling” campaign, which was launched after one of the newspaper’s journalists was severely injured while cycling (Pank, 2012). That debate attracted 77 MPs from the three major parties, and the government ultimately adopted several of the measures put forward.

25 Typically it is junior ministers who attend Westminster Hall debates, but senior ministers may attend in some cases depending on the issue and its significance (Norton 2013).
The following year, the group secured a second backbench debate in the main chamber on the motion:

That this House welcomes the recommendations of the All-Party Parliamentary Cycling Group’s report ‘Get Britain Cycling’; endorses the target of 10 per cent of all journeys being by bike by 2025, and 25 per cent by 2050; and calls on the Government to show strong political leadership, including an annual Cycling Action Plan and sustained funding for cycling (United Kingdom. Backbench Business Committee, 2013a).

The motion was agreed without a recorded division, but the group did not rest on its laurels, instead securing yet another backbench business debate in the main chamber in October 2014. While ostensibly held on a nearly identical motion,26 Labour MP Ian Austin, one of the group’s co-chairs, stated that the real purpose was to discuss the “Cycling Delivery Plan” that the government had promised in response to the group’s “Get Britain Cycling” report. After the debate was scheduled, the government hurriedly delivered a draft of the plan, releasing it on the day of the debate. Group members criticized the document, with another co-chair, Liberal Democrat MP Julian Huppert, asking “Why are the Government not taking the obvious steps?... why is this planning missing out so much on funding?... I cannot understand why the Government are not acting” (2014: 505–506). Other Conservative and Labour MPs also raised the funding issue, and criticized the government for waiting until pressured to release the strategy. As Labour MP Richard Burden put it,

we were told by Ministers more than a year ago—this has been mentioned already—that there would be a cycling delivery plan… We have been asking the Government for a year, “Where is it?” It has been a bit like waiting for Godot, but, amazingly, one Back-Bench debate and suddenly, hey presto, the delivery plan appears—or, as some have called it, the derisory plan (2014: 506).

Such criticism of the government can be found in the backbench business debates brought forward by other APGs as well. For instance, in 2011, the APPG on Media secured a debate in the main chamber for a motion calling on the government to “reconsider the scale and timing of its proposed cuts” to the BBC in order to preserve local and regional broadcasts and overall program quality. The group’s chair, Labour MP Austin Mitchell, bluntly critiqued the plan,

26 The motion was identical except for replacing the word “welcomes” with “supports” and adding the phrase “and progress towards meeting the report’s recommendations” at the end of the motion.
declaring that the cuts would be “deeply damaging to the quality of the BBC service” (2011: 1108). Likewise, in 2012 the APPG on Metal Theft received a debate for its motion calling for the government to take further action to tackle the illegal sale of stolen metal to scrap dealers (Jones, 2012). Both motions were adopted without divisions.

Although Westminster Hall debates can help APGs to raise the profile of an issue, the greater visibility and votable nature of the backbench business debates held in the Commons makes them more sought after among MPs. Indeed one respondent reported arguing with the Backbench Business Committee that the debate they proposed was too important to leave to the secondary space of Westminster Hall (confidential interview, November 2012). Nevertheless, Westminster Hall Debates may also be used by APGs seeking more detailed discussions of pressing policy issues, such as when the APPG on Gibraltar held a debate on recurring incursions by Spanish police and naval vessels into the region’s territorial waters (Bennett, 2013).

In addition to the Commons, British APGs may also seek debates in the House of Lords as well. As with Westminster Hall, debates in the Lords are non-votable, but the relevant minister in the Lords must attend and respond to the comments made. One recent example came in March 2015 when Lord Lloyd of Berwick secured a debate on the report of a joint inquiry into immigration detention that was conducted by the APPG on Migration and the APPG on Refugees (Inquiry into the use of Immigration Detention, 2015). The report later went on to be the subject of a backbench business debate in the Commons in September 2015, with MPs agreeing to a motion supporting the inquiry’s recommendations.

Though the debates themselves tend to be less confrontational, similar tactics are often used by APGs at Holyrood as well. The system of “members’ motions” in Scotland is to some extent a hybrid between the British Parliament’s EDMs and Westminster Hall debates. Individual MSPs can place members’ motions on the Parliament’s “Business Bulletin.”27 Once a motion is lodged, other MSPs can indicate their support. As with EDMs, there are thousands of members’ motions filed each year, with many simply congratulating local individuals or organizations on various achievements. However, motions that raise broader policy issues and receive “cross-party

27 The Business Bulletin tracks the business under consideration at the Scottish Parliament and is equivalent to the “Order Paper” used at the Canadian and British Parliaments.
support” from at least three of the major party groups may be selected for a members’ debate. To be eligible, such motions must not include any language could be seen to “call on’ anyone or any organization to do anything” and the debate itself is for information and discussion purposes only, with no vote taken (Scotland. Parliament, 2015). Nevertheless, in keeping with Westminster Hall, a minister must attend and respond to the points made.

From Scotland’s 2011 election until November 15, 2015, over 420 members’ motions were debated (Scottish Parliament Information Centre, 2015). The requirement for cross-party support meant that many of these debates focused on issues championed by APGs, with the motions often put forward by group members themselves. An example was the members’ debate on motion S4M-04293, which welcomed the “updated version of the online Dyslexia Toolkit created by Dyslexia Scotland” (Mitchell, 2012). The motion was lodged by Margaret Mitchell, convener of the CPG on Dyslexia, and was supported by 30 MSPs.

Ms. Mitchell’s dyslexia motion did not criticize the government, but others can be more confrontational. Although members’ business debates are not supposed to “call for” specific actions, considerable scope remains to highlight policy failure and push for government action. A case in point is motion S4M-11495, which was lodged in 2014 by MSP Malcolm Chisholm, co-convenor of the CPG on Health Inequalities. It read:

That the Parliament believes that there are growing inequalities in health between the best-off and the worst-off people in the Edinburgh Northern and Leith constituency and across Scotland; notes the view that these need to be tackled as a matter of urgency;… notes the calls for shadow health and social care integration boards to support services that reduce inequalities and for them to invest in nursing roles that allow such services to be successful, and further notes the calls for the Scottish Government, NHS boards, local authorities and shadow integration boards to put in place long-term secure funding for services that are designed to reduce health inequalities (Chisholm, 2012).

As can be seen, Mr. Chisholm’s motion clearly expresses the view that the government should take urgent action on the issue of health inequalities. It received support from 23 MSPs and was debated in early 2015.

At the Canadian Parliament the function of EDMs and member’s motions is performed by two other tools: members’ statements and the system for private member’s business. Members’ statements (also known on as SO-31s for the number of the standing order that governs their
operation) are one minute statements made by backbench MPs on matters of their choosing. Fifteen spots are available each sitting day, which are divided by among the parties in proportion to their standing and then allocated by the party whips among individual members.\footnote{In 2013 the Speaker of the Commons ruled that individual MPs can rise and be recognized by the Speaker to make a member’s statement even if they are not part of the list prepared by the whips. In practice, however, this almost never happens.}

Canadian MPs regularly use members’ statements to raise awareness about APGs and their activities among their parliamentary colleagues. For instance, following the 2008 and 2011 elections Garry Breitkreuz, co-chair of the Parliamentary Outdoors Caucus, made statements to advertise upcoming group meetings and urge MPs to join (Breitkreuz, 2009, 2011). Likewise, MP Bruce Stanton, the co-chair of the All-Party Oceans Caucus, used an SO-31 to promote a caucus event with an expert on ocean acidification (Stanton, 2014). Two of the co-chairs of the Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care also made members’ statements to draw attention to the launch of the group’s report on palliative care (Albrecht, 2011; Comartin, 2011).

Though much less common, Canadian APGs have also used members’ statements to call for action by the House or the government. In 1996, MP Elsie Wayne made an SO-31 to draw attention to a resolution passed by the All-Party Sugar Caucus that called on the government to take action against new US tariffs on Canadian sugar exports (Wayne, 1996). Nearly a decade later, MP John Maloney gave a statement on behalf of the All-Party Steel Caucus to express its support for a private member’s bill (C-223) that would offer better protection for unpaid workers’ wages during bankruptcy proceedings (Maloney, 2005).

While less frequent, Canadian Senators also may make members’ statements to promote group activities. This is particularly true of those Senators who lead APGs, such as Senator Kelvin Ogilvie, chair of the Health Research Caucus, and Senator Romeo Dallaire, past chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity. Provisions for members’ statements also exist at the Ontario Legislature. However, a member’s statement by MPP Kevin Flynn advertising a meeting of the Cement Caucus was the only such instance found for a subject group in the province (Flynn, 2012).
Although members’ statements can be useful tools for Canadian and Ontarian legislators seeking to advertise APG activities to their colleagues, they seldom attract media attention and have little long-term impact on policy decisions. Indeed, they are less consequential than British EDMs or Scottish members’ motions given that other members cannot formally endorse the ideas expressed. By comparison, the systems for private members’ business in Ottawa and Queen’s Park offer APGs a much greater chance to raise the profile of an issue and possibly to secure legislative change.

Private members’ business provides all members of the Canadian Parliament and the Ontario Legislature who do not serve in cabinet the opportunity to introduce either a bill or a motion for debate. Private members’ bills cannot spend or raise funds, but otherwise have the same force of law as government legislation. In contrast, while private members’ motions come to a vote, the results are non-binding, making them similar to the backbench business debates at Westminster. In both assemblies, the order for the consideration of private members initiatives is determined by a lottery following each election. Legislators can introduce an unlimited number of bills at first reading and lodge an unlimited number of motions on the Order Paper, but must select a single motion or bill for consideration when their turn for debate comes up. The systems for private members’ business also perform some of the functions of EDMs and members’ motions in that legislators in Ontario and Canada may formally second each other’s bills or motions.

Canadian APGs often employ private members’ initiatives, some of which can be very assertive. For instance, in 1995, Liberal MP Paul Zed, Chair of the All-Party Sugar Caucus, introduced Bill C-311, “An Act to require the Minister for International Trade to retaliate against import restrictions introduced by the United States of America on Canadian refined sugar and sugar-containing products.” As its name suggests, the bill would have required the government to retaliate against the American tariffs, but it did not pass second reading. More recently, the Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care used the private members’ system in an attempt to implement some of the recommendations from its report on palliative care and suicide prevention. In 2011 MP Harold Albrecht, the group’s Conservative co-chair, introduced Bill C-300, which would require the federal government to consult with stakeholders and develop a framework for suicide prevention within four years of its passage. In 2013 another group member, NDP MP Charlie Angus, put forward motion M-456, which called on the government to establish a “Pan-Canadian Palliative and End-of-life Care Strategy.” Both
initiatives were jointly seconded by members from all major parties and were passed with nearly unanimous support (D’Amato, 2012; O’Malley, 2014).29

In addition to putting forward their own private members’ initiatives, Canadian APGs may also mobilize around those put forward by other MPs. While not officially endorsing the legislation, the HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis Caucus held a briefing for parliamentarians on a private members’ bill that would have made it easier for Canadian companies to export generic versions of patented medications for use in developing countries (confidential interview, January 2014). In 2012, the All-Party Women’s Caucus also issued a press release opposing M-312, a private members’ motion introduced by MP Stephen Woodworth that called for the creation of an all-party committee to examine the question of when human life begins. The motion was seen as an attempt to re-open the abortion debate, and the Women’s Caucus opposed it on the grounds that they “firmly believe in a woman’s right to choose whether or not to go through with a pregnancy. It is a fundamental and non-negotiable right” (Bennett, 2012).

Though few in number, several of the APGs at the Ontario legislature have used private members’ initiatives in pursuit of their objectives as well. Several private members bills aimed at improving cycling safety had been introduced prior to the formation of the All-Party Cycling Caucus. However, its founding gave the initiatives enhanced cross-party support and led to some improvements in drafting. MPP Norm Miller noted the impact of the caucus in his speech reintroducing a bill that called for all provincial highways to have a minimum one-metre paved shoulder for cyclists:

This bill also differs from previous versions that I introduced in that it also calls for an amendment to the Highway Traffic Act. It came to my attention in the first meeting of the All-Party Cycling Caucus, with my colleagues the members from Kitchener–Waterloo and Eglinton–Lawrence, that under the current legislation, it is actually illegal for cyclists to ride on the shoulder portion of the highway. So Bill 137 includes an amendment that would make it legal for cyclists to ride on paved shoulders (Miller, 2013).

While not brought forward on its behalf, the legislature’s Lung Health Caucus is also very active in supporting private members’ bills as well. As one respondent described, it provided a “forum to individuals who had private member's bills to present them to the rest of the caucus… and

29 The Bloc Quebecois opposed both initiatives on the grounds that they intruded on provincial jurisdiction.
maybe see if [they] could get support for their Bill explicitly from the other parties or even get a cosigner from other parties” (confidential interview, May 2014). Private members’ initiatives supported by the Lung Health Caucus include Bill 38, the Smoke-Free Ontario Amendment Act, which would prohibit flavoured and smokeless tobacco, and Bill 41, the Lung Health Act, which would require the province to establish a Lung Health Advisory Council and create a provincial strategy around lung disease.

Despite some similarities, the system for private members’ business at the British Parliament is substantially different from that in Canada and Ontario. While a ballot is held among members to determine the order for debate, there is no provision for private members’ motions. More importantly, there is also no guarantee that the private members’ initiatives that come up for debate will actually be put to a vote. Instead, the motion to end debate and vote on each private member’s bill is itself votable, with the result that many proposals are “talked out” before a vote is held. However, in addition to bills introduced through the ballot, British MPs may also bring forward so-called “Ten Minute Rule Bills” and Presentation Bills. Though while perhaps useful to draw attention to an issue, bills introduced through these other procedures are even less likely to actually be voted upon.

APG members in the UK frequently use private members’ bills to pursue their desired policy goals, or mobilize in support of those brought forward by other MPs. MP John Glen made this link clear in his opening statement for the second reading of his Presumption of Death bill in the 2012-2013 parliamentary session:

Having been given this opportunity, I thought carefully about the legislation I should present to the House. I concluded—on the basis of my time as a member of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Runaway and Missing Children and Adults, and also on the basis of personal experience—that a means of supporting families by dealing with the uncertainties surrounding presumed death would be an extremely worthwhile cause to champion (Glen, 2012).

Several interviewees also highlighted the support from the APPG on Mental Health for MP Gavin Barwell’s Mental Health (Discrimination) bill in 2012-2013 session, which revoked various measures that officially prevented people with mental illness from serving as MPs, jurors, or company directors. Likewise the members of the APPG on Metal Theft were staunch supporters of the MP Richard Ottaway’s Scrap Metal Dealers bill in the same session.
The process for private members’ bills at Holyrood bears little resemblance to that in the other jurisdictions. Rather than a lottery, MSPs can put forward a draft proposal for a member’s bill at any time. The draft then goes for public consultation for 12 weeks, after which a final proposal is made based on the feedback received. The proposal is placed on the Business Bulletin for a month, during which time it must receive signatures from at least 18 MSPs who together represent at least half of the recognized party groups. Bills meeting this threshold within the time required then go forward for debate.

As with members’ motions, this need for cross-party support results in many of the bills focusing on issues addressed by APGs. In the Parliament’s third session, MSP Ken MacIntosh, co-convenor of the CPG on Cancer, brought forward a bill on the regulation of sunbeds, which had been linked to a rise in skin cancer. The bill was widely supported, and was eventually withdrawn when the government put forward its own measures. Other initiatives lodged in the same session included: a bill by the convenor of the CPG on Deafness to have British Sign Language recognized as an official language in Scotland; a bill by the convenor of the CPG on Skills to create a right to apprenticeships; a bill by the convenor of the CPG on Animal Welfare on the control of dogs; and a bill by the vice-convenor of the CPG on Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency to require the Scottish government to support micro-generation and energy efficiency initiatives. The dog control bill passed in that session, while a new version of the sign language bill passed in the session following.

Beyond private member’s business, APGs in each jurisdiction may also take positions on bills put forward by the government. In fact, some groups are specifically established to help parliamentarians engage with pieces of government legislation. In Canada, the Parliamentary Caucus on Intellectual Property, Anti-Counterfeiting and Anti-Piracy was largely created to foster discussions on intellectual property reform in advance of new government legislation on the subject (Doyle, 2008; Geist, 2008). Similarly, the CPG on Park Homes at Holyrood formed in 2012 as the government began consultations for a new Housing Bill (confidential interview, December 2012). The group’s stated purpose was “To promote understanding of the issues and concerns around Park Home Residential living in Scotland and to engage with all stakeholders in

30 “Park Homes” is the British term for mobile or trailer homes.
this regard with particular focus on the need to update legislation covering this form of home ownership and in removing any perceived legislative anomalies” (Cross-Party Group on Park Homes, 2014). The CPG continued to meet while the bill was under debate, but appears to have ceased operations it received Royal Assent in 2014.

British APGs also regularly attempt to influence government legislation, a reality that could be clearly seen during the debate over the Health and Social Care Bill 2011. The Bill proposed many controversial reforms to the NHS, prompting many of the health-focused APGs to hold meetings to discuss the changes. Most prominent were the sessions that the All-Party Parliamentary Health Group held with Professor Steve Field, who was appointed by the government to lead a “listening exercise” after the initial draft of the Bill received widespread public criticism. While these meetings with parliamentarians was only part of the part of the listening exercise, the overall process convinced the government to introduce substantial amendments. The APPG on Primary Care and Public Health also conducted a five-month inquiry on the bill while it was still being considered by Parliament. The group’s final report was sharply critical, stating that “Overall, we concluded that the NHS did not need a wholesale restructuring. We were also concerned at the cost of the reforms, £2-3 billion… in light of the Government wanting the NHS to save £20bn by 2015,” (2012: 10).

Another instance of APG influence on government legislation in the UK can be found in amendments to stalking legislation that were adopted in 2012. The need to revise the UK’s criminal provisions on stalking came to light through an extensive inquiry by the Justice Unions Parliamentary Group (one of the UK’s unregistered APGs). The group published its report, which included proposed new stalking legislation, in February 2012, and then began pressuring the government to implement the changes (Grimely, 2012). The campaign attracted considerable media attention, and the following month Prime Minister David Cameron met with activists on International Women’s Day to signal his support (BBC News, 2012). The measures, based largely on the group’s report, were then included as last minute amendments to the Protection of Freedoms Act, 2012. The BBC’s Chief Parliamentary Correspondent Mark D’Arcy (2012) called the chain of events “Lawmaking at speed” and referred to it as “a huge triumph for the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on stalking, and its chair, Elfyn Llwyd.” Mr. D’Arcy’s confusion of the Justice Unions Parliamentary Group with a properly registered APPG also underlines the
difficulty that even seasoned parliamentary observers have in distinguishing the different types of cross-party activity at Westminster.

3.4 Media engagement

While producing reports, engaging with ministers, and developing private members’ initiatives may be effective ways to pursue policy change, APGs in the UK, and to a lesser extent Canada, often complement these activities with press releases or photo ops in hopes of gaining public support for their objectives, and thereby increasing the pressure for government action. Such media engagement is also regularly employed by those APGs that seek to change the behaviour of businesses or other non-governmental actors. Indeed, for such groups public shaming through the media is often the only tool available to change the behaviour of a corporation or other body.

By engaging with the media, APGs risk taking on a more confrontational position vis-à-vis the government, or at the very least creating unwanted media attention for ministers and public officials. As discussed further in the next chapter, this greater potential for confrontation explains why APGs in some jurisdictions are more likely to use the media than in others. In particular, British parliamentarians have more scope to challenge their own ministers, and so are more likely to raise criticisms in public. Conversely, greater cross-party tensions and party loyalty mean that many Canadian APGs are less likely to draw public attention to their policy suggestions – or even make them in the first place – for fear of being seen as criticizing the government. Greater cross-party tensions may also help to explain the lack of media engagement by Scottish APGs, although their tendency to serve as broad stakeholder forums also means that government departments are at times involved developing new policy ideas within a CPG, rather than just being pressured to accept the suggestions after the fact. Given this inclusive nature, Scottish APGs appear to have less need to appeal to the media, and most lack a web presence beyond that hosted on the Scottish Parliament’s register of groups.

When APGs do engage with the media, their goal is often to draw attention to group activities or to publicize the release of new inquiries or reports. APGs in the UK are the most media saavy in this regard, with APG reports regularly attracting media coverage in the major newspapers (e.g. *The Guardian, The Times, The Telegraph, The Independent*, etc.) as well as the BBC. Often times the chairs of APGs will also publish open letters in specific media outlets to draw attention to their reports, and will make themselves available for subsequent interviews as well. In
Canada, both the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism and Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care issued press statements to highlight the launch of their reports, but did not employ open letters.

APGs may also send out press releases to respond to current events or express their views on new pieces of legislation or policy decisions. For instance, in 2007 Canada’s All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity issued a press release calling on the government to improve its response to the conflict in Darfur (All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity, 2007). Likewise, in 2012 the members of the All-Party Women’s Caucus held a press conference to call on their fellow MPs to defeat M-312, the private members’ motion related to abortion that was mentioned above. Such media engagement around current events may also target private actors. One high profile case in the UK came in 2012 when the APPG for Democracy in Bahrain (a subject group) responded to that country’s crackdown on pro-democracy activists by publishing an open letter calling on the Formula One Association to cancel the Bahrain Grand Prix, and also imploring corporate sponsors to boycott the event (“MPs urge sponsors to boycott GP,” 2012; Press Association, 2012). On the other side, the APPG for Bahrain (an inter-country group) published its own open letter in the Telegraph arguing that the Grand Prix should go ahead as an incentive to ensure that the country remained committed to reform (Cary, 2012).

To increase their impact, APGs will often coordinate their press engagement with their external stakeholder organizations. For example, in addition to the group’s own press statement, the publication of the Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care’s report on palliative care was accompanied by parallel releases from a range of stakeholders, including the Canadian Cancer Society, the Canadian Council of Catholic Bishops, and the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association, all of which endorsed the report and supported its findings. However, such press releases can at times misrepresent the relationship between APGs and their external supporters. For instance, the press release issued by the Canadian Cancer Society (2011) in response to the Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care’s report did not note that the organization had covered the printing costs for the document. As such, while the charity presented itself as an impartial supporter of the group’s findings, in reality it was a contributor to their production.
In addition to such coordination of press releases, APGs may also rely on their external partners for media relations and public engagement support. In some cases APG press releases are directly issued by the sponsor organizations, and at times may have the organization’s own branding in addition to that of the APG. A large number of APGs also lack their own independent webpages, with their online presence instead being housed on the website of its secretariat sponsor. This reliance on external support is especially true for APGs in the UK, although instances were found in Canada and Scotland as well. While many groups would not be able to engage with the media without such assistance, this communications management can lead to questions regarding who is driving the groups’ agendas.

In addition to press releases or open letters, APGs may also hold press conferences, photo-ops, or other media events to draw attention to their reports, policy requests, or simply to raise the profile of an issue (Norton, 2013). These events may have props, backdrops, or representatives from civil society in order to create more interesting visuals. An example can be found in figure 4.4, which presents MPs posing with the World Wildlife Fund’s panda mascot at a Canadian All-Party Oceans Caucus event in 2015. Although not formally providing the group’s secretariat, WWF suggested the creation of the group and sponsors the majority of its events. Another common photo-op is to have pictures of parliamentarians with boxes of signed petitions supporting policy positions endorsed by an APG. Such petitions are often mobilized by APGs’ partner organizations, again blurring the line between advocacy by parliamentarians and the views of their outside partners. For instance, figure 4.4 presents a photo-op in which members of the Canadian All-Party Anti-Poverty Caucus received boxes of signed postcards calling on the Canadian government to create a national anti-poverty strategy. The postcards were organized by the Dignity for All Campaign, which also is one of the caucus’ major sponsors.

While ostensibly promoting the group’s objectives, pictures from APG events and photo-ops are also useful for parliamentarians themselves as well as the groups’ external stakeholders, who regularly need content for their own newsletters to constituents and supporters. Moreover, parliamentarians are often more likely to receive press coverage in their local news media, which generally has fewer resources and so are more likely to republish the press releases they receive almost verbatim. As a result, many parliamentarians will issue their own press releases within their constituencies drawing attention to their involvement in APG activities. In the UK, some APGs even produce templates that group members can adapt for use with their local media. For
instance, at least three different MPs, Conservative Andrew Stephenson and Liberal Democrats Tim Farron and John Pugh, all included the same quote in the press releases they issued regarding the APPG on Financial Education’s success in changing the school curriculum (Farron, 2013; Pugh, 2013; Stephenson, 2013).

Figure 4.4 – Parliamentarians with the World Wildlife Fund panda mascot and an All-Party Oceans Caucus event in 2015 (Photo credit Wright, 2015)

Figure 4.5 – Parliamentarians in the Canadian All-Party Anti-Poverty Caucus accept postcards from the Dignity for All Campaign (Photo credit Baybach, 2015)
Figure 4.6 – Photos of British MPs participating in the “MPs in Pubs” campaign that appeared in local media articles

Clockwise from top left, George Eustice MP (Photo credit “MP takes a turn pulling pints for his constituents during shift at bar,” 2011); Rebecca Harris MP (Photo credit Thomson, 2012); Phillip Lee MP (Photo credit Bracknell News, 2012)

A variant of this approach was also adopted by the UK’s APPG on Beer and the All-Party Save the Pub Group, which together launched the “MPs in Pubs” campaign to encourage their members to spend time pulling pints at their local pub (Perrett, 2012). Over 100 MPs participated in the pub visits, which served both to educate parliamentarians on the travails of local publicans, and also provided wonderful photo-ops for local media, as evidenced in Figure 4.6. Such local press coverage can therefore help to obtain policy change by raising awareness of a particular issue, but also allows parliamentarians to portray themselves as being active within their communities.

Beyond traditional media, many APGs in the UK have also opened social media accounts. As of November 2015, at least 54 British APGs had a Twitter presence. Some groups, such as the APPG Against Antisemitism (@APPGAA), the APPG on Sexual and Reproductive Health
(@APPGSRH), and the APPG on Africa (@AfricaAPPG) update their accounts regularly, using them to engage with stakeholders, advertise meetings, and promote their findings. Others, such as the APPG on Body Image (@appg_bodyimage), had opened accounts but then left them dormant. By comparison, only one APG in each of Canada and Scotland had a Twitter presence, and none was found for an Ontario group. The Scottish account belonged to the CPG on Families Affected by Imprisonment (@CPGonFAbI), but no tweets had ever been sent. In Canada, the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity (@prev_gen) tweeted regularly for several years beginning in 2010, but then suddenly stopped in March 2015. The only other Canadian APG on Twitter, the All-Party Interfaith Friendship Group (@APIFCanada), was similarly active throughout most of 2013, but then went silent. The greater social media presence of British APGs would appear to reflect both their larger resources and their role as policy entrepreneurs.

4 Parliamentary diplomacy

APGs not only seek to change the policies of their home governments, but may also attempt to shape the views of foreign governments and parliamentarians as well. As noted in Chapter 1, this international activism can be seen as part of the broader phenomenon of “parliamentary diplomacy,” which is a relatively new topic within international affairs. As Baldassarri notes, “Parliamentary diplomacy is an oft-utilized concept for politicians, scholars, instead, have ignored it” (2011: 399). Malamud and Stavridis define it as “parallel diplomatic relations” conducted by legislators instead of executives (2011: 101). They see it as encompassing a vast range of activities, arguing that parliamentary diplomacy can be “formal or informal, led by parties or individuals, secret or open, and conducted with or without the blessing of national executives” (2011: 104). Weisglas and de Boer adopt a similarly broad understanding that includes the “full range of international activities undertaken by parliamentarians in order to increase mutual understanding between countries” (2007: 93). These definitions illustrate that parliamentary diplomacy is not necessarily about the completion of treaties or the resolution of specific disputes, but rather building relationships and exchanging ideas.

Several researchers specifically highlight APGs as part of this diplomatic activity. Malamud and Stavridis (2011) point to the work of “Friendship Groups” between legislatures, noting that the relationships built among legislators can lead them to push back against the “realpolitik” pursued
by national governments. Such understanding develops through broad-based exchanges on matters beyond traditional international affairs. For instance, Weisglas and de Boer (2007) raise the example of the friendship group between members of the lower houses of the Dutch and French parliaments, which for several years exchanged ideas on the integration of immigrants in large urban areas. However, scholars of parliamentary diplomacy also accept the challenges it faces, including a lack of expertise and turnover among legislators (Malamud and Stavridis, 2011).

At both Westminster and in Ottawa, the first bilateral inter-country APGs to emerge were focused on the United States, and these groups remain single largest focus of parliamentary diplomacy in both Parliaments. The British-American All-Party Group is the only British APG to receive any funding from the Parliament itself, running at £110,000 per year. It also is the largest APG in the UK, with membership of 367 MPs and 284 Peers in 2015. Its main activity is to arrange exchanges between parliamentarians from the two countries where members discuss policy issues, such as military cooperation or trade. However, development of “mutual understanding” between legislators is also a major goal (British-American Parliamentary Group, 2015). As part of this effort, the Group has now developed a “Sister Member” program that seeks to pair British and American parliamentarians with similar interests, committee responsibilities, backgrounds, or districts.

The Canada-United States Inter-parliamentary Group operates in much the same fashion, and like its British counterpart is the largest APG at the Canadian Parliament. However, in addition to visits to Washington, group members also attend a wide range of meetings for the Council of State Governments, National Governors’ Association, and other bodies. All told, the Canada-United States Inter-parliamentary Group sent delegations to 18 different meetings of one sort or another in 2014. By contrast, the Canada-China Legislative Association, which is also fully funded by the Parliament, sends delegations to just three to four events per year.

This focus on the United States likely reflects its dominant role in world affairs, and the power that members of Congress have in shaping its external relations and economic policy. This is particularly true in the Canadian case given the country’s dependence on cross-border trade. Over the years, members of the Canada-United States Inter-parliamentary Group members have lobbied their Congressional colleagues on pressing topics including mad cow disease (Easter,
2004), softwood lumber (Bagnell, 2001), country of origin labelling (Easter, 2009), and ballast rules for shipping in the Great Lakes (Zajac, 2014). One former cabinet minister also noted the group’s efforts to fight tougher passport and border control restrictions, summarizing the role of the group as to lobby Congress on the border and the economy given that it often had more impact on these matters than the US administration (confidential interview, January 2014).

Few other inter-country APGs in Canada or the UK have resources comparable to those for the United States. Nevertheless, the goal of these other groups is largely the same – to build improved international understanding, and at times to lobby on specific policy issues. For instance, members of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association have raised matters such as the Canadian seal hunt and the Canada-EU Trade Agreement with their counterparts from European countries. In some cases, inter-country APGs may also raise more sensitive subjects such as the respect for human rights within a country, or engage in institutional development activities. Indeed, one British MP described giving a talk to legislators in a former communist country on questions of public ethics and corruption (confidential interview, November 2012).

As mentioned in Chapter Two, inter-country APGs have emerged in Holyrood even though the Scottish government has only a limited role in foreign affairs. The MSPs interviewed indicated that this growth in part resulted from efforts by Scottish National Party MSPs to expand the country’s international profile ahead of efforts to gain independence.31 As one described it, “the cross-party groups are now twinning, as it were, with countries that are very important… I suspect the cross-party group with Russia will be doing that, and Germany. So these are important particularly as Scotland looks at, towards independence” (confidential interview, November 2012). In keeping with Scotland’s restricted international presence, such groups tend to focus more on cultural exchanges, but trade issues are raised as well.

Besides inter-country groups, diplomatic advocacy can also be conducted by some subject groups as well. In Canada, one of the first acts of the Parliamentary Border Caucus was to meet with the US Ambassador in Ottawa to discuss the flow of trade (United States Embassy in Ottawa, 2005). The Parliamentary Steel Caucus and the Sugar Caucus similarly went to

31 The British government refers to Scotland as one of the constituent “countries” or “nations” within the broader United Kingdom.
Washington at various points to lobby against trade restrictions for their respective industries (Parliamentary Centre, 2003; Zed, 1995b). Numerous subject-focused APGs in the UK also engage in diplomatic activity, such as the APPGs on *East Asian Business* and the *Abolition of the Death Penalty*.

The international advocacy conducted by APGs is at times supported or even prompted by their respective foreign ministries. Many British and Canadian parliamentarians who were involved with inter-country APGs described being asked by their respective foreign ministries to meet with or entertain visiting dignitaries from the various partner countries. While such meetings were primarily social, dignitaries were also said to appreciate the opportunity to engage with opposition and backbench legislators, who at times provided different views from those expressed by ministers or officials. Parliamentarians travelling abroad with inter-country groups were also typically briefed by foreign service officials before departing. In some cases, group members were asked to raise certain issues, or to contact officials in the partner country that British or Canadian diplomats had been unable to engage with. As one Canadian parliamentarian put it:

> We also have assisted foreign-policy where Canada is not very strong… We went in to make presentations and representations for our ambassador because he couldn’t open the doors. Parliamentarians can open doors sometimes the governments and ambassadors can’t. So we don’t want to be led by the nose by ambassadors, but we want a good cooperative relationship. And we’ve had ambassadors write back to ministers and say, what they did was phenomenal, they got doors open for us that we couldn’t have, and they moved the agenda further (confidential interview, November 2013).

Respondents in Britain similarly stressed the role of parliamentary diplomacy through APGs as a way to engage with countries that were either unrecognized by the UK, or were in the midst of a conflict with the British government (confidential interview, November 2012). For instance, the first visit to Iran by British politicians following the closure of the British embassy in 2011 was conducted by a delegation of members from *APPG on Iran*, led by former Foreign Secretary Jack Straw. While the British government insisted that it was not an official trip, Mr. Straw’s office reported that “the Foreign Office had been ‘very helpful’ in facilitating the visit” (Dehghan, 2014).
In addition to advancing the interests of their home countries, the parliamentarians involved in inter-country APGs may also become advocates for their partner countries as well. In particular, foreign diplomats often see the parliamentarians who belong to a given inter-country group as potential champions and attempt to keep them briefed on issues of concern. For instance, one member of the UK-Canada APPG at Westminster described receiving a briefing on the oil sands from the Canadian High commission in London at the time that the European Union was considering additional tariffs on oil sands products (confidential interview, November 2012). Foreign ambassadors will also regularly invite members of inter-country APGs to attend dinners or receptions to build good will and provide opportunities for informal networking. This use of APGs to cultivate friendly parliamentarians is a long established tradition among diplomats, and indeed was noted in Barker and Rush’s study of the parliamentary engagement by the Kuwaiti embassy to the UK over 45 years ago:

Like most of the diplomatic missions in London, Kuwait’s puts the emphasis of its political links with politicians on the all-part group of MPs and peers which exists to foster good relations between the two countries… The Group as such is secondary to the idea of having some sympathetic Members (preferably of all parties) who can help with wider good relations by suggesting Members to invite to embassy receptions or to be invited on an official visit to the country concerned during normal times and by lobbying or organising on behalf of the country if difficulties in its relations with Britain arise (1970: 110–111)

In some cases, APG members may even publicly challenge their own government’s policy towards the partner country. In 2008, MP Patrick Brown, chair of the Canada-India Parliamentary Association, published an op-ed urging the Canadian government to reinvigorate bilateral relations by pursuing an economic co-operation agreement, facilitating travel for Indian tourists, and increasing partnerships between Indian and Canadian universities. He also called for Canada to “move beyond our knee-jerk reaction to India as a nuclear power… towards signing a comprehensive nuclear co-operation agreement to help ensure clean energy can be delivered to 1/6 of the world's population” (Brown, 2008). Whether or not as a result of Mr. Brown’s efforts, in 2009 Canada and India announced a joint study on the possibilities for a comprehensive economic agreement. A year later they also negotiated a nuclear cooperation agreement (Curry, 2010). At Westminster, Lord Faulkner (2012), co-chair of the APPG on Taiwan, published a similar op-ed urging the British government to make a “fresh start” on its relations with the island, including by rethinking its position on the “one-China” policy. This willingness for
parliamentarians to lobby their own governments on behalf of foreign states helps to explain why so many diplomats work to create and maintain inter-country APGs.

An interesting variant of this trend for APG members to act as advocates for foreign governments can also be found at Westminster, where some inter-country APGs exist to facilitate relations by self-governing territories that are technically part of the UK itself. A handful of the groups, namely the APPGs for Bermuda, the Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, and St. Helena, are well established, dating back to at least 1996. As the number of British APGs rose in recent years, new groups emerged including those for the Channel Islands, Montserrat, the Turks and Caicos and the general group for Overseas Territories. The members of these groups often challenge the British government to expand the support offered to these territories.

5 Event coordination and problem resolution

As noted in Chapter Two, British APGs are regularly used to coordinate among parliamentarians who wish to prepare for an upcoming event, or respond to a problem affecting a particular group of citizens. Recent examples of the former include the APPG on the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee, the APPG on the Olympics and Paralympics, and the APPG on the Magna Carta, which was founded in advance of the document’s 800th anniversary to facilitate parliamentarians’ participation in the celebrations. Cases of the latter can be found in the APPG on the Arch Cru Investment Scheme, formed to help the those invested in the defunct Arch Cru fund; the APPG on Scottish Power Cashback Mis-selling, established to help customers who were sold “cash-back” warranties by a Scottish Power subsidiary that subsequently went bankrupt; and the APPG for Visteon Pensioners, created to help workers at the former Ford Motor Company subsidiary Visteon UK, whose pensions were substantially reduced after it too become bankrupt.

Such groups are notable in that they tend to be short-lived and often lack a distinct policy focus. For instance, the APPG on the Magna Carta did not seek a specific policy change from government except for greater support for the 800th anniversary celebrations in 2015. To that end, the group’s chair presented a ten minute rule bill to create a new bank holiday in honour of the Magna Carta’s signing (Laing, 2011). While the bill received unanimous support for a first reading, it did not become law. Similarly, the main activity of the APPG for the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee was to fundraise £85,000 from parliamentarians for the installation of a new stained glass window at Parliament in her honour (McGurran, 2012).
Those APGs seeking to aid particular groups of citizens also tend to focus less on long-term policy change than on resolving the short-term problems that they face. Such campaigning often avoids legal arguments in favour of calling for the government or the parties involved “to do the right thing.” In this vein, the APPG on Visteon Pensioners sought to pressure Ford into honouring pension guarantees made to Visteon workers at the time the subsidiary was spun off. The group held evidence sessions with the former employees, and secured a backbench business debate to highlight their plight and to put pressure on Ford. While the debate touched on broader issues around corporate responsibility, the motion itself focused on moral suasion, not legal arguments or policy changes:

That this House notes that, when Visteon UK Ltd was spun off from the Ford Motor Company, employees transferred from Ford’s pension scheme into the Visteon UK pension fund on the clear understanding that their pension rights would be unaffected;… regrets that the resolution of any court action is still some way off; believes that Ford should recognise a duty of care to its former employees and should make good the pension losses suffered by those worst affected without the need for legal action; and calls on the Government to use the power and influence at its disposal to help ensure that Ford recognises its obligations and accepts voluntarily its duty of care to former Visteon UK pensioners (United Kingdom. Backbench Business Committee, 2013b emphasis added).


Short-term APGs may also lobby for policy change if the government is involved with the events or problems that they address. For the APPG on the Olympic and Paralympics, just convincing the government to bid on the event was its initial policy objective (Bewley, 2012). Once London won the 2012 games, the group shifted focus to monitoring the planning of the games and ensuring the strongest possible legacy (Simmons, 2012). The APPG on the Arch Cru Investment Scheme initially focused on securing a government inquiry into the fund’s collapse, and then pressured the Financial Services Authority to increase the compensation given to investors (O’Loughlin, 2012; Tolley, 2012).

6 Regional representation

While the number of groups has been small, there is a long tradition at Westminster of using APGs to represent regional interests, with Thomas (1985) noting the presence of the APPGs for
Wales and the Isle of Wight some 30 years ago. Some of these APGs, like those just mentioned, focus on region as a whole, while others, such as the APPG on Tourism and Hospitality Industry in Wales, deal with a particular policy issue from a regional perspective.

The role of APGs as a tool for regional representation declined in the early 2000s, with a substantial number groups, including the APPGs for Scottish Children, Scottish Housing, and Scottish Sports, disbanding following the devolution of powers to the Scottish Parliament. Those noted by Thomas in the 1980s had also ceased operation. However, since the 2010 election there has been a surge in the number of groups being formed for different regions of England, including the re-forming of the APPG for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, and the establishment of APPGs for London, the London-Standsted-Cambridge Corridor, the West Midlands, and Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire. New policy-focused groups have also been created as well, such as the APPGs for Housing in the North and Rail in the North.

The parliamentarians interviewed suggested this renewed interest resulted from English MPs trying to make sure that their regions received a fair share of government support following the dissolution of the regional development agencies in 2012. In addition, MPs from many English regions had not been as well mobilized as those from the devolved areas, and so wanted to organize themselves to more effectively lobby for government support. As one MP put it:

> We lost all of our regional development agencies under this government, and there is no regional voice. Whereas there are strong voices for Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales and for London, and there is almost bugger-all for the big regions of this country and the big manufacturing cities. And so the… Group came together – again on a cross-party basis – to try and have… because they feel they don’t have the focus on their region (confidential interview, May 2013).

Another provided almost the same sentiment:

> the idea of setting up an APPG… as a kind of regional focus because, largely in response to the fact that the Scots are very well-organized, Welsh MPs are somewhat organized. And even MPs from the Southwest seem to be better organized on issues. So the idea was to kind of have a regional focus… Because there is no regional government of course. So we got no kind of voice. It was a way to just try to bring us together for that (confidential interview, November 2012).

Thus far no broad regionally focused groups have been formed in the other three jurisdictions. However, some APGs dealing with specific regional policy issues have emerged. At the Scottish Parliament, these include the CPGs on Borders Rail and Glasgow Cross Rail, both of which
were largely populated by MSPs from the affected regions. Likewise, the Trent Severn Caucus brings together the members of the Canadian Parliament and the Ontario Legislature whose constituencies touch upon the Trent Severn canal system.

7 Signalling and symbolic representation

Past investigations of all-party groups have noted their ability to signal a politician’s support for a given cause to constituents or organized groups (Hammond, 1998; Ringe et al., 2013). As Hammond writes,

Caucuses expand the opportunity for representation. Simply joining a caucus can be symbolic evidence of concern about an issue. Cosponsoring caucus amendments or bills can have a similar effect. In both activities, representatives demonstrate responsiveness, build trust between constituents and elected officials, and gain support for the member and for Congress as an institution (1998: 224).

However, this description appears to conflate two of the aspects of representation identified by Eulau and Karps (1977). On the one hand, they refer to “policy responsiveness” as occurring when representatives base their own interventions in legislative or policy debates on the preferences of their constituents. On the other, they see “symbolic representation” as requiring more than such formal actions, arguing that “The representational relationship is not... just one of such concrete transactions, but also one that is built on trust and confidence expressed in the support that the represented give to the representative and to which he responds by symbolic, significant gestures, in order to, in turn, generate and maintain continuing support” (1977: 246).

In keeping with this distinction, it is necessary between the use of APGs as tools for signaling to constituents and as a means of actual symbolic representation. Parliamentarians in the jurisdictions examined may certainly create or join an APG solely to signal support for a given constituency. However, such a signal can be made without having any desire for the group to be active, or to achieve any specific objectives. In keeping with this reality, several of those interviewed in the UK spoke about APGs that existed in “name only” and met just often enough to stay registered. In Canada, it is similarly common for parliamentarians to found a new APG and to refer to themselves as members despite allowing several years to go by between actual meetings. The presence of these inactive APGs indicates that the most basic activity accomplished by an APG is simply to exist, with its mere presence signaling that an issue, social group, or actor is considered to be important by parliamentarians and the broader political
system. To borrow from Marshall McLuhan (1964), the medium of an APG delivers the message to stakeholders that someone or something is valued by parliamentarians – be it cancer patients, the aerospace industry, brass bands, those affected by an investment scheme, or relations with a given country. Conversely, the absence of an APG on a given issue may demonstrate that parliamentarians have yet to recognize its importance. Indeed, one civil society activist was incredulous that of the more than 600 APGs at the British Parliament in 2013, no group existed for LGBT rights (confidential interview, April 2013). However, one was created following the 2015 British election.

However, as Eulau and Karp’s discussion of symbolic representation makes clear, the existence of an APG alone may not be sufficient for some groups or actors to feel well represented or appreciated within political system. Instead, when faced with a well mobilized stakeholder community, APGs must take ongoing steps to demonstrate that these communities are valued and their concerns are understood by parliamentarians. This kind of engagement involves a deeper connection between legislators and the communities represented by APGs than that envisioned through the concept of signaling, with symbolic representation necessitating the developing of trust and relationships over time through repeated interactions and engagements.

The balance between symbolic activities and other tasks varies greatly between different APGs. Given that parliamentary diplomacy is to largely aimed at developing mutual understanding and trust, symbolic representation can be seen as one of the primary activities performed by inter-country APGs, and often is indistinguishable from such diplomacy itself. This is not to deny that inter-country groups regularly deal with particular policy issues, such as the border and immigration disputes that surface in the Canada-United States Interparliamentary Group. However, these issues could equally be addressed through subject groups, as Canada’s All-Party Border Caucus or the UK’s APPG on East Asian Business. Instead, the existence of so many APGs dedicated to relations with other jurisdictions indicates that their purpose goes beyond addressing specific policy concerns to the broader function of demonstrating the importance of the partner country and/or its diaspora community within the host parliament. In fact, many of the more active APGs at the Canadian Parliament are not for countries that are strategically or economically important to Canada, but for those like Ukraine or the Philippines that have large diasporic communities. In some instances, APGs may not even focus on a foreign country as
whole, but rather particular ethnic groups or regions, such as the Canada-Tamil Parliamentary Friendship Group or the Canada-Scotland Friendship Group.

Symbolic representation is also a major function of those APGs that deal with specific social groups or communities of interest. In recent years, the UK has seen a proliferation of APGs focusing on religious communities, including those the APPGs for the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, British Jews, British Hindus, British Sikhs, and Zoroastrians. These groups joined the longer standing APPGs for Bahá’ís, Humanists, Methodists, and Christians in Parliament. As with the inter-country groups discussed above, these APGs exist alongside those for policy issues relating to religious communities, such as the APPGs on Antisemitism, Christian and Jewish Relations, Interfaith Dialogue, Islamic Finance, Islamophobia, Religious Education, and Religious Freedom, leaving the religion-specific groups to place a greater focus on symbolic representation within the political system. This focus is clearly evident in the stated purpose for the APPG for British Hindus, which reads:

To support and promote the interests of British Hindus to Parliament; to encourage political parties in the UK to actively engage with the British Hindu community to ensure proper Hindu representation at all levels of politics; to consider related international issues on behalf of British Hindus; to press for more government engagement with the Hindu community; to highlight and acknowledge the exceptional and significant contribution of the British Hindu community in all walks of life (United Kingdom. House of Commons, 2015a).

Importantly, this focus on symbolic recognition within the various APGs for religious or ethnic communities does not mean that they are devoid of any policy concerns. Indeed, the APPG on Hindus in the UK has intervened or held events dealing with a number of issues, including the persecution of Hindus in Bangladesh, human rights violations in Pakistan controlled Jammu and Kashmir, and unintended consequences of British legislation that sought to end discrimination based on caste. The APPG on Bahá’ís also regularly supports parliamentary questions and motions concerning the persecution of Bahá’ís in Iran. However, such groups typically devote far more time and effort to symbolic activities than is the case for most other APGs.

While most evident in those groups based on a national or religious identity, all APGs do serve a symbolic function to some extent, and many specifically recognize that reality. For instance, the purpose of the UK’s APPG on Thalidomide is simply stated as “To support the victims of Thalidomide and other prescription drugs by raising awareness and seeking explanation” without
making any reference to policy (United Kingdom. House of Commons, 2014). Likewise, the APPG on Small Shops, which is supported by the Association of Convenience Stores, exists “To raise awareness of the positive economic and social contribution of small shops and the areas of public policy that affect them” (United Kingdom. House of Commons, 2015b). In fact, even APGs for large industries may explicitly acknowledge the desire for greater respect from parliamentarians. This can be seen in Scotland, where the CPG on Oil and Gas exists in part “to encourage greater recognition of the importance of the oil and gas industry” among MSPs (Cross-Party Group on Oil and Gas, 2016).

In terms of activities, much of the symbolic representation performed by APGs focuses on recognizing the special days that exist for different communities. Among inter-country groups, this typically involves making statements, holding receptions, or attending events to honour the national holiday or other significant events for the partner country. In the case of the Canada-Armenia Parliamentary Friendship Group, the chair (MP Harold Albrecht) not only makes annual member’s statements to mark Armenia’s Independence Day, but separate statements for the anniversary of the Armenian Genocide as well. Canada-Armenia Group members also attended the Independence Day receptions at the Armenian Ambassador’s residence (Beaulne-Stuebing, 2014). Mr. Albrecht’s statements regarding the Armenian Genocide always reference Armenian Canadians, highlighting the APG’s role in connecting with the diaspora community. Despite their relatively recent development, this focus on national days can already be found among inter-country groups in Scotland as well, with the convener of the CPG on France attending Bastille Day celebrations put on by the Consul General in Edinburgh shortly after the group was founded (“French-born MSP marks Bastille Day,” 2013). Such events can also provide an opportunity for lobbying by corporations based in the partner country. A case in point are the “Taste of Belgium” events put on jointly by the Canada-Belgium Parliamentary Friendship Group and Labatt Breweries, which is owned by Belgian firm Anheuser-Busch InBev (Embassy Newspaper, 2013, 2014).

Among APGs for religious groups, such symbolic events tend to revolve around holy days, with the British APPGs for Hindus, Jews, and Sikhs respectively organizing events at Westminster to mark Diwali and Raksha Bandhan, Chanukah, and Gurpurab (All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Jews, 2013; Hindu Forum of Britain, 2015; Mogul, 2015). For most other APGs, symbolic activities focus on designated national or international days, or significant
anniversaries. For instance, in 2012 the convenor of the *CPG on Deafness* secured a members’ motion debate at the Scottish Parliament to mark Deaf Awareness week, the convenor of the *CPG on Gàidhlig* did the same to honour the 10th Anniversary of the passing of Scotland’s *Gaelic Language Act*, and the convenor of the *CPG on the Scottish Showmen’s Guild* obtained a debate to celebrate the Guild’s 125th Anniversary (Lyle, 2012; MacDonald, 2012; Marra, 2012). In Canada, the *HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis Caucus* holds an annual breakfast at Parliament to mark World AIDS Day (Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development, 2014). Similarly, the *Anti-Poverty Caucus* convened a discussion panel to mark the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (Sanchez and Leilani, 2012), while in 2014 the *All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity* hosted an event to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Rwandan Genocide.

In addition to honouring the symbolic occasions for their respective constituencies, APGs may also go further to create new occasions as well. The *Canada-Portugal Parliamentary Friendship Group* supported a private members’ motion to have June 10th, Portugal’s national holiday, designated as “Canada-Portugal Day” (Chow, 2010). Similarly, the *All-Party Outdoors Caucus* supported a bill by Conservative MP Rick Norlock to have the third Saturday in September designated as “National Hunting, Trapping and Fishing Heritage Day” (Norlock, 2014). At the Ontario legislature, the *All-Party Cycling Group* drove the passage of a private members’ bill to proclaim June as “Ontario Bike Month.” Each initiative was successful.

### Table 4.2 – Annual Awards Operated by British APGs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Name of Award</th>
<th>Last awarded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APPG on Body Image</td>
<td>Body Confidence Awards</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All-Party Parliamentary Corporate Social Responsibility Group</td>
<td>National Responsible Business Champion Awards</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All-Party Parliamentary Jazz Appreciation Group</td>
<td>Parliamentary Jazz Awards</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All-Party Parliamentary Small Shops Group</td>
<td>Best Small Shop Competition</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPG on Maternity</td>
<td>First 1000 Days Awards</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All-Party Parliamentary Rugby Union Group</td>
<td>Premiership Rugby Community Awards</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the UK, a number of APGs have created annual awards to recognize achievement among their stakeholders. For instance, each year the APPG on Small Shops group runs the “Best Small Shops” competition, which “celebrates the economic powerhouse represented by small retailers” by selecting the 20 best small shops in the UK (The Independent Retailers Confederation, 2015). The various APG awards encountered during the course of this research are summarized in Table 4.2. Others likely exist.

While important in their own right, these symbolic activities performed by APGs often link to and support the other initiatives that the groups undertake. Legislative debates held to mark symbolic days provide an opportunity to raise policy issues of concern, or lobby legislators to support private members’ bills. Likewise, receptions give stakeholders a chance to network and share information. Media attention also can be easier to secure for those activities held around symbolic dates. However, the symbolic component of APG activities can also generate challenges as well. Stakeholder communities often insist that they should each have their own distinct APG even if there is substantial overlap in the issues they address. Several of the MSPs interviewed at the Scottish Parliament indicated that the various APGs on disability issues, such the CPGs for Visual Impairment and Deafness, had opposed merging with the broader CPG for Disability in order to preserve the specific focus on those conditions. In London, an MP involved with the Speakers’ Working Group on All-Party Parliamentary Groups similarly described the secretariat organizations as being “precious” about their particular causes and unwilling to merge them (confidential interview, November 2012).

8 Conclusion

While covering the main activities and functions performed by APGs, the above discussion is not exhaustive. Instead, individual APGs were found engaging in a range of unique activities that defied categorization. For instance, the British APPG on Extraordinary Rendition undertook legal action in both the UK and the United States to secure access to information regarding British participation in the US program (Bowater, 2012). Ultimately, the activities undertaken by APGs appears to be limited only by parliamentarians’ imaginations, the resources available, and perhaps the regulatory framework in which they operate.

Despite this diversity, the activities pursued by APGs can still be grouped into distinct functions. In addition to those noted in past research, such as information exchange, policy advocacy, and
signalling, this study also identifies several further functions performed by APGs, including symbolic representation, regional representation, and the coordination of parliamentarians’ engagement with either upcoming events or crises facing large groups of constituents. Of these, symbolic representation stands out as the most basic function performed by APGs. Indeed, while there are many APGs that undertake an ongoing program of symbolic activities in order to build and maintain trust with the communities they represent, a basic level of symbolic representation is accomplished simply by the mere existence of a group. This reality can help to explain why parliamentarians and external stakeholders are willing to maintain the formal existence of APGs for different issues even if the groups themselves do not meet regularly. This symbolic function performed by APGs also to some extent accounts for their growth in recent years, with the number of groups rising at the same time as the number of social groups demanding political recognition also increased.

The plethora of activities undertaken by APGs and the wide range of functions they perform also helps to explain the recent growth in the number of APGs by illustrating the extent to which the groups have become modular tools that can be employed by parliamentarians and stakeholders with a wide range of goals. Rather than a set pattern of behaviour, each APG undertakes those activities that its members and external partners feel are best suited to achieving its goals. For some groups, this could be conducting a public inquiry and then mounting an activist media campaign that highlights policy failings by the government. For others, it could mean exchanging information with stakeholders under Chatham House rules and then meeting privately with ministers to raise points of concern. The activities undertaken by APGs also change over time as APGs innovate and develop new strategies that are then diffused throughout the broader APG community. For instance, the rise of APG inquiries and the recent spread of regionally focused APGs in the UK demonstrate how the perceived success of a new tactic can lead it to be quickly emulated by existing groups or spark the creation of new ones. Overall, the modularity and flexibility of APGs as a tool for political activity appears to have greatly facilitated their expansion across different policy sectors and different jurisdictions.

At the same time, however, the general pattern of APG activities varies substantially between jurisdictions. Groups in Scotland tended to focus on the exchange of information between legislators and stakeholders, and largely shied away from the production of reports or advocacy through the media. The same was largely true of the APG in Canada and Ontario as well,
although some Canadian groups did engage in some mild advocacy around relatively non-controversial issues like palliative care or poverty reduction. APGs in Ontario were also disproportionately active in the use of private members business for policy change. However, it is the APGs in the UK that show the broadest spectrum of activities, with various APGs now holding award ceremonies, publishing magazines, or lobbying the government on behalf of Britain’s overseas territories. The next chapter helps to account for these differences by exploring the structure and operation of APGs across the four jurisdictions and the various axes of conflict that can limit their operations.

Finally, this review of the activities undertaken by APGs underscores the extent to which these groups rely on their external partners for their success. Indeed, many APGs are unable to undertake even the most basic tasks – including the holding of general group meetings – without support and funding from external stakeholders for refreshments, logistics, and other costs. However, this support raises questions about the extent to which APG operations are truly driven by parliamentarians themselves – questions that grow louder when APG reports or press releases are drafted by external lobbyists. Ultimately, such external support is a double-edged sword, on one side raising groups’ capacity to impact the policy process, while on the other potentially harming their independence and credibility. This issue will be explored more thoroughly in the discussion of the factors shaping participation by outside groups in Chapter Eight.
CHAPTER 5

APG STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS

1 Introduction

There is no single model of APG structure, and no one method of group operation. Instead, membership and leadership structures, the provision of funding and resources, and decision making procedures can vary greatly both between jurisdictions and within them as well, with important implications for APGs’ level of internal democracy, the possibilities for conflict between participants, and group transparency. These differences in turn can shape the range of activities that groups undertake, with some needing to limit their ambitions in order to maintain cross-party support and engagement from external sponsors.

This chapter reviews the membership and executive structure of the APGs in the four jurisdictions, the resources they have available, the main axes of conflict that emerge within APGs, and the decision-making procedures that they employ. This study reveals substantial differences in basic APG structure across the cases. Group membership is much more formalized in the UK and Scotland, with groups in those jurisdictions needing a certain number of members to officially register. In contrast, many APGs in Canada and Ontario do not have any formal members beyond their executives. Yet while the groups at the two Canadian legislatures limit formal membership to parliamentarians, those at Holyrood and until recently some of those at Westminster allowed outside actors to participate as full members.

Similar variations between cases can also be found in group leadership structures and the level of external support received. APG executives are the most uniform in Scotland, where they typically consist of two or three members, and most diverse in the UK, where they range from two members to a high of 27. While falling short of the range seen at Westminster, APG executives in Canada and Ontario also tend to be larger and more elaborate due to the need to accommodate members of all parties and/or both parliamentary chambers. As for external assistance, those in the UK enjoy the greatest support, with the top three best resourced groups each reporting more external financial assistance than all APGs at the Scottish Parliament.
combined, enabling them to operate a much broader program of activities. Nevertheless, most Scottish APGs do have external support for secretarial services. By comparison, APGs in Canada are much less transparent in their financial affairs, but appear to fall somewhat closer to the UK, with a substantial number of groups receiving external support for travel in addition to that for secretarial services.

The structure of APGs gives rise to three main axes of conflict, namely competition between parliamentarians for leadership positions; disagreements between parliamentarians and external stakeholders over policy recommendations; and tensions between legislators from different parties over the scope of APG activity. Conflicts over leadership positions often break along party lines, and while generally infrequent appear more likely to occur following a change in government. Conflicts between stakeholders and parliamentarians are less frequent still, and have largely been limited to Scotland, where the rules governing APGs allow external actors to become full group members, creating the potential for disagreements over group actions. In contrast, tensions between members of different parties over the scope of group activities can be found in each jurisdiction, but the severity varies greatly between them. In Canada, Scotland, and Ontario, APGs tend to avoid policy advocacy and overt criticism of the government in order to maintain support and participation from governing party legislators. Conversely, parliamentarians in the UK are much more willing to criticize their own parties, allowing APGs to engage in a wider array of activities, and to pursue them more aggressively.

Yet despite these jurisdictional differences in terms of APG structure, external support, and the potential for conflict among group members, in most cases APGs operate in a largely similar fashion, with each relying on a small number of leaders to manage group affairs on a day-to-day basis. These members tend to rely heavily on input and ideas from their external partners, frequently allowing these actors to greatly influence group activities. However, the scope of the decision-making authority available to these leaders varies in keeping with the partisan tensions both within each jurisdiction, and on the issue in question.

2 Group structure and internal democracy

Although there can be considerable variation between individual groups within the same jurisdiction, the membership and executive structure of each APG is primarily shaped by the rules and informal norms found in each legislature. As described in Chapter 2, prior to 2015
British APGs that sought registration were required to be open to all members of the Commons and Lords, to have at least two officers elected by group members, and to have at least 20 “qualifying members” consisting of 10 from the governing party or coalition and 10 from the opposition, including at least five from the official opposition. Though some APGs at Westminster claim hundreds of members, only the names of the qualifying members were ever published in the online registry, making it impossible to track how many actually belonged to each group. However, the officers of each group have been posted online since 1996. The data reveal that most groups have more than the minimum two required officers, with the average executive size gradually creeping up from 4.7 parliamentarians in 1996 to 5.4 in 2014. Inter-country groups tend to have slightly larger executives than subject groups, with the 2014 average being 6.1 and 5.1 respectively. By far the largest executive belongs to the British-American Parliamentary Group, which had 27 officers in 2014, including 18 Vice-Presidents and designated positions for the prime minister and the speakers of both houses. The APPGs on China and Foreign Affairs were tied for a distant second place with 14 positions each.

Non-parliamentarians are not permitted to serve as officers in British APGs. However, until late 2014 those APGs that operated as “associate parliamentary groups” did allow external actors to become group members. While these groups were not required to report the names of their external members, several charged membership fees for external actors that were disclosed on the APG registry as a financial contribution. For instance, the May 2001 APG register revealed that 72 external members had each paid between £500 and £2000 to join the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee, while 69 universities each paid £500 to join the APPG on Universities. All told, 11 of the 35 associate parliamentary groups on the registry listed their external members, declaring an average of 30 members each.

APGs at the Scottish Parliament that wish to register must have at least one member from each of the five party groups at the Parliament, as well as at least two MSP office holders, consisting of either a convener and a deputy-convener, or two co-conveners. The Parliament also allows non-MSPs to become full voting members of each group and to hold executive positions. Scotland’s APG registry lists the names of all members belonging to each group, not just the five MSPs required for registration, making it the only jurisdiction where it is possible to examine membership trends over time for both parliamentarians and external actors.
Table 5.1 presents the number of average number of members and executive officers for Scottish APGs at the end of the Parliament’s first session in 2003 and again in 2014. In 2003, the APGs at Holyrood had an average of 16 MSP members each, ranging from a low of six in the CPG on Gaelic to 40 in the CPG on Cancer. By September 2014, this average had dropped to just 10 MSPs per group, with the three smallest groups, the CPGs on Gàidhlig, Russia, and The Caribbean, each having just four MSPs, suggesting they were either between members, or had been given special permission to operate with fewer than five MSPs. In contrast, participation in APGs by external actors grew enormously over this period, with the average number of organizational members nearly doubling, and the average number of individual members more than quadrupling. These external participants were not, however, evenly distributed across groups. Instead, the organizational membership ranged from just one actor in CPG on the Scottish Showmen’s Guild (the Guild itself), to over 150 for the CPG on Children and Young People, including many medical and educational charities. Likewise, there were 18 groups with no individual members at all, while the CPG on Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency had 388.

Table 5.1 – Average number of group members and executive officers for Scottish APGs in 2003 and 2014, by actor type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th># of APGs</th>
<th>Average number of members</th>
<th>Average executive officers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MSPs</td>
<td>Individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mirroring the decline in memberships, the average number of MSPs serving on the executive of Scottish APGs also fell from 3.1 to 2.7 between 2003 and 2014. Yet, while member-level participation by external actors rose sharply, the number of executive positions they occupied fell by nearly half. This discrepancy appears to stem largely from the fact that most of the external actors who provided APG secretariats were listed as executive members on the 2003 registry, but

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32 The 2003 declarations were obtained from a copy of the Parliament’s register of APGs that was captured by the Internet Archive on 2 April 2003. The 2014 data were obtained directly from the Scottish Parliament’s website on 7 September 2014. In both cases, webscraping software was used to extract the information from the registries into datasets for analysis.
not in 2014. If the 47 additional organizations which provided operated APG secretariats were considered as group officers, then the average external executive members per group would have been 1.2, up slightly from 2003. The number of groups with an external member serving as either co-convenor or deputy convenor also increased marginally from five to seven between 2003 and 2014. Examples from 2014 include the German Consul General in Edinburgh, Verena Grafin von Roedern, serving as the deputy-convenor for the CPG on Germany, and John Sheridan from the Mineral Products Association of Scotland serving as deputy-convenor of the CPG on Construction.

These changing patterns of participation in Scottish APGs have important implications for group democracy and accountability. In 2003, there were just 18 APGs at Holyrood that had more external members than MSP members. By 2014, the situation had completely reversed, with only 10 groups having more MSPs. Moreover, while the number of external actors who formally serve on group executives may have declined, so too has the number of MSPs. This decline suggests that the expansion in the number of groups at the Parliament has diluted the level of MSP involvement in each group at the same time that participation by external actors has risen. Considering that external members are eligible to vote in elections for the MSP officers and on broader group decisions, it would appear that the external members are now the dominant force in many APGs – a possibility that only grows stronger when it is remembered that many MSPs are largely inactive in the groups to which they belong.

The membership structure of Canadian APGs varies greatly by group type, although all limit formal membership exclusively to parliamentarians. Most inter-country groups – whether officially recognized or not – have a defined membership and hold elections for their executive positions. While any parliamentarian can join, these APGs (including those with parliamentary support) often charge membership fees (typically around $20), restricting those who are eligible to run or vote for executive positions. The members and officers of those inter-country groups that receive parliamentary support are listed on the Canadian Parliament’s website, and in 2013 they had an average membership of 68 parliamentarians. However, the average was much higher among those that receive full travel support (79) and lower among those that only have administrative support (36). The most popular association was the Canada-United States Interparliamentary Group with 120 members. Least popular was the Canada-Italy group, which had just 27.
In contrast, while some unrecognized inter-country groups issue press releases publicizing their members and executives (e.g. Saxton, 2013; Ukrainian Canadian Congress, 2011), others, such as the friendship groups for India, Thailand, and Vietnam, consider their memberships to be confidential, making it impossible to track membership trends across the broader category (Flynn, 2013). This insistence on confidentiality regarding the membership of the unrecognized inter-country groups is a long-standing practice dating back to the 1980s (Diebel, 1985).

On the subject APG side, some groups at the Canadian Parliament, like the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity, also have a defined, dues-paying membership that elects the group officers. However, many others have no members whatsoever beyond their leaders. The executives for these groups are typically self-appointed to their positions, and organize events that are open to all parliamentarians. Some MPs and Senators who attend these open meetings may describe themselves as group members, but no formal records are kept. Such groups generally form when one parliamentarian decides to create an APG and then approaches colleagues from other parties to form a cross-partisan executive, or when the executive is recruited by outside stakeholders or lobbyists. Examples of these member-less groups include the Clean-tech, Climate Change, Friendship Centres, Health Research, HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis, and Oceans caucuses.

To further complicate matters, several subject APGs at the Canadian parliament use a hybrid model that combines an un-elected executive with a defined membership. For instance, the Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care was formed by a group of MPs who were concerned that the lack of adequate palliative care services in Canada was fuelling demand for legally assisted suicide among those who otherwise would have preferred a natural death. These MPs established themselves as an executive, but then sought out other parliamentarians who wished to join the group and to contribute financially to its inquiry (PCPCC 2011). Similarly, the Aerospace Caucus has defined members, but lacks an elected executive. When it relaunched in 2012, it first found those to serve as co-chairs and then sought a broader membership (Plecash, 2012).

The executives for Canadian APGs are typically structured to ensure participation by all parties and, to a lesser extent, both chambers of the legislature. The fully supported intercountry groups all have relatively large executives, with an average of 13 members. The available positions are
generally first divided between the two chambers, and then allocated among their members according to party standings. For instance, the constitution of the *Canada-United States Inter-parliamentary Group* reserves 30 percent of the seats on the 17 member executive for Senators, with the remaining posts going to MPs. One co-chair is also selected from each Chamber. The remaining positions are then distributed “to reflect the party representation in both Chambers” (*Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group, 2007*). The parliamentarians interviewed felt this inclusive structure is essential to ensure that intercountry APGs can represent and speak for the Canadian Parliament in a non-partisan fashion when abroad. However, the constitutions of the four recognized “interparliamentary groups” (i.e. those that receive administrative support but not travel funding) only require executive positions to be distributed between the two houses of parliament, not among the parties.

Most of Canada’s unrecognized inter-country groups and subject groups have smaller, less elaborate executives, but maintain the principle of cross-party representation, with the majority having either a co-chair or vice-chair from each major party. As discussed further below, this approach can create challenges if a group deals with an issue that is the subject of strong tensions between different parties. In recent years, several groups, including the *All-Party Women’s Caucus*, have struggled to find Conservative parliamentarians to sit on their executives.

At the Ontario legislature, all but one of the four active APGs lack either a defined membership or a defined executive. The *All-Party Cycling Caucus* has no members, only an executive composed of one MPP from each party. Conversely, the *Lung Health Caucus* has members, but no executive, with its operations largely directed by the Ontario Lung Association. The same is true of the *Cement Caucus*, which has an honourary legislative chair but appears to be managed directly by the Cement Association of Canada. The only Ontario APG with both members and an executive is the *Trent-Severn Caucus*. However, this APG is also exceptional in that it is composed of the four provincial MPPs and four federal MPs whose ridings touch the Trent Severn canal system. One member from each legislature is chosen as a co-chair. The geographic basis of the caucus membership also means that there is no guarantee of cross-party representation. At the time the caucus was established in 2008, the four federal MPs were all from the Conservative party, as were two of the four Ontario MPPs (Devolin, 2008).
The various membership and executive regimes across the cases can be grouped into three categories based on the need for cross-party consensus. At one extreme is the UK, where the rules governing APGs are aimed at ensuring APGs have sufficient participation from both the governing party and the main opposition. While there is no requirement for the executive positions to be shared across party lines, the need for at least 10 parliamentarians from the government and five from the main opposition party give these parties an effective veto over group activities. In contrast, the various smaller parties have no guarantee of inclusion, meaning that the APGs at Westminster may not reflect the full range of views on a subject within the Parliament.

In the middle of the spectrum for cross-party participation is the Scottish Parliament. While it similarly has no requirement for executive posts to be shared among parties, to remain registered APGs must have at least one member from each party group at the Parliament with at least five MSPs. These rules reflect the inclusive ideals of “new politics” that guided the Parliament’s creation, and mean that the smaller party groups, including the Conservatives, Liberal Democrats, and Greens/Independents, can potentially have a greater influence on APG activities. The 12 fully supported APGs at the Canadian Parliament take this focus on cross-party cooperation a step further by requiring each group to reserve executive posts for members from each major party group. These provisions have been imitated by several of the unrecognized inter-country groups and subject groups in Ottawa as well, reflecting the belief among Canadian parliamentarians that all major parties must be represented in APG decision making for a group’s activities to be legitimate. Indeed, several respondents spoke of how they had delayed launching a new group while searching for executive members from each party. Such Canadian accounts closely resemble those from the US Congress, where Ringe et al. observed that “bipartisanship is such a key feature of some caucuses that they will sometimes by stymied by the departure of a co-chair, as the caucus attempts to recruit a member from a specific party to take the chair’s place. In such instances, the caucus may prefer to lie dormant for a while rather than appear to have leadership from only one party” (2013: 121). The priority given to cross-party representation at the Canadian Parliament can also be seen in the large number of subject groups that lack defined memberships. Rather than gaining legitimacy from being elected by their peers, the officers of these groups are seen as legitimate precisely because there is representation from all parties.
Although the small number of APGs in Ontario make it challenging to identify a distinct trend, the groups generally appear closer to the Canadian model. For instance, the legislature’s *All-Party Cycling Caucus* has similarly has co-chairs from each party group who were self-appointed to the positions. Therefore while APGs in Canada (and possibly Ontario) are structured to prevent intra-party conflict by requiring inclusive decision making, the rules for APGs at the British Parliament appear to accept that groups cannot represent all views – a approach in keeping with the looser party discipline found at Westminster. Moreover, the decision to eliminate the requirement for qualifying members following the 2015 election means that in the future British APGs are likely to become even more willing to adopt positions opposed by one party or another.

3 Group funding and resources

Like all organizations, APGs require resources to operate. At a minimum, meetings must be arranged, agendas prepared, and notifications sent to members. Given that only a tiny handful of APGs have access to parliamentary resources, a common theme raised by respondents across the four jurisdictions was that external support is vital to APG success. This external assistance regularly goes beyond basic secretariat services to include support for group meetings (e.g. refreshment costs, travel expenses for speakers), communications (e.g. websites, social media, printed publications), travel, and research. Some APGs do survive without any assistance, but doing so increases can reduce group effectiveness and increases the burden on parliamentarians’ staff, taking more resources away from dealing with constituents or other duties. Indeed, even with professional assistance from an external organization, parliamentary staff in Canada, Scotland and the UK all reported spending considerable time dealing with issues arising from the APGs chaired by the parliamentarians they worked for.

As detailed further in Chapter Eight, the outside actors who support APGs are as varied as the APGs themselves, and include individuals who volunteer their time, charities, foreign governments, and major international corporations. There is also great variation in the assistance itself, with some actors offering in-kind support like secretarial services, while others provide cash donations. In addition to maintaining the operation of APGs over the short term, external actors frequently provide groups’ longer-term organizational structure and institutional memory. If the chair or other executive members of an APG are defeated, retire, or otherwise cease being
active, it will quite often fall to the external partner(s) to find new parliamentarians to serve as officers and reconstitute the group.

APGs’ need for external support is not new, nor limited to the four cases studied here. Writing over 50 years ago, Walkland (1964) noted that the informal nature of the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee meant that it lacked the resources to conduct independent studies, and hence was heavily reliant on information from its external partners. In their study of the APGs at the US Congress and the European Parliament, Ringe et al. (2013) found that many groups form “privileged relationships” with one or a small number of external actors. These stakeholders provide APGs with a range of “legislative subsidies” that include “organizing events and bringing in speakers, sending out invitations for meetings, drafting letters, generating reports, direct advocacy, recruiting new caucus members, research, communicating with offices, and hosting events” (Ringe et al., 2013: 6, 170). External partners may even help APGs to draft proposed legislation. Ringe et al. describe such relationships as “symbiotic,” with legislators receiving support and information, while the external partners gain access to lawmakers.

This reliance on external partners for both short-term organization and long-term continuity generates concerns as to who is actually in control of each group. Such worries are not helped by the fact that some external partners hire lobby firms to provide services to APGs rather than undertaking the work directly, leading to concerns about influence peddling and conflicts of interest. In response, some APGs have established new independent secretariat organizations (ISOs) specifically to manage their affairs and place external funding at arms’ length. In doing so they have created a new type of political actor that combines the non-partisanship of NGOs with the policy focus of lobby firms, and the secretarial and research functions normally performed by committee clerks and researchers. The creation of ISOs has gone furthest in the UK, but can also be found in Canada as well.

This section reviews the extent of external support received by APGs in each of the four cases. Due to the different reporting regimes at each legislature, the information available varies widely, with the UK and Scotland being more comprehensive, and Canada and Ontario much less so. Nevertheless, substantial gaps still exist in the British and Scottish data as well. It should also be stressed that many more external actors engage with APGs beyond those who provide financial or in-kind support.
3.1 United Kingdom

The APGs in the UK enjoy the most support – both in terms of volume and substance – of the four jurisdictions in this study. Indeed, several British APGs have developed into multi-faceted organizations that resemble independent think tanks, with dedicated staff, a regular program of events, detailed research, and professional communications. These activities in turn are only possible thanks to extensive external support from a wide variety of actors. However, this support is not evenly distributed, with a few groups enjoying the lion’s share of the assistance provided.

Prior to 2015, the rules governing the registered APGs at the British Parliament required them to declare any support – either financial or in-kind – totalling more than £1,500 from a single outside source in a given year. As such, APGs could theoretically receive contributions of £1,499 from 100 different sources and still not be required to declare any external assistance. Those groups receiving in-kind support, such as secretariat services or hospitality, were also supposed to provide a brief description of the services received. However, the level of detail given was often minimal, meaning that two seemingly similar declarations of external support could capture drastically different levels of involvement by outside groups. For instance, the APPGs on Africa and Bridge on made similar declarations of support on the August 2014 APG registry, with the former reporting that the “Royal African Society (a charity) provides the group’s secretariat” and the latter that “English Bridge Union (a not-for-profit organisation) provides secretariat services.” In reality, the Royal African Society provided a full-time staff person to operate the APPG on Africa, enabling the group to maintain an active schedule of events, issue frequent policy reports, and publish the regular “Africa in Parliament” newsletter. It also hosts the group’s website as a subsection of its own webpage, and maintains the group’s Twitter account (@AfricaAPPG). By comparison, the website for the English Bridge Union contains just one press release that mentions the All-Party Parliamentary Bridge Group (English Bridge Union, 2010). In a survey conducted as part of the Standards Committee’s report on APGs, 61 percent of the 255 groups that responded reported receiving no secretariat support on a weekly

33 The website of the APPG on Africa lists nine meetings between October 2014 and July 2015 (Royal African Society, 2015).
basis, while just four percent received over 26 hours per week (United Kingdom. House of Commons. Committee on Standards, 2013)

Table 5.2 presents the external support disclosed by British APGs just prior to the 2001 election and again in August 2014. Importantly, the British-American All-Party Group is excluded from the Table as it the only APG in the UK to enjoy parliamentary funds, receiving £84,600 in 2001 and £110,000 in 2014. The data are separated by group type to highlight the sharp gap in support received by subject and inter-country APGs. As can be seen, while there was an increase in the proportion of inter-country groups registering assistance over the period, they still lagged far behind their subject group counterparts, with the latter remaining three times more likely report external support.

Table 5.2 – Declarations of external support by British APGs, 2001 and 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number declaring any form external support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inter-country</strong></td>
<td>15 (16%)</td>
<td>34 (26%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject</strong></td>
<td>181 (80%)</td>
<td>380 (80%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>196 (62%)</td>
<td>414 (68%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number declaring external support with monetary value</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inter-country</strong></td>
<td>7 (8%)</td>
<td>7 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject</strong></td>
<td>37 (16%)</td>
<td>57 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>45 (14%)</td>
<td>65 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total value of monetary support declared</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inter-country</strong></td>
<td>£117,170</td>
<td>£102,894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject</strong></td>
<td>£709,648</td>
<td>£1,832,157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>£831,645</td>
<td>£1,935,051</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those interviewed suggest this gap likely reflects the fact that the members of inter-country APGs are regularly invited to functions sponsored by the embassies or high commissions from their partner countries, even though the functions are not APG events. Parliamentarians may also be invited to travel to the partner country as a result of their membership in the APG without it

34 The 2001 data was obtained from an archived copy of the British APG registry contained on the Internet Archive. The 2014 data was obtained the APG registry house directly from the Parliament’s website. In both cases webscraping software was used to extract the information into a dataset for analysis.
being a formal delegation. Indeed, as was noted in Chapter Four, several MPs involved with inter-country APGs declared external support for visits to partner countries on the Register of Members’ Financial Interests rather than on the APG registry (Wright and Macaulay, 2012). As such, more external support is regularly offered to these inter-country groups than what is declared on the registry, and being a member of an inter-country APG at Westminster may carry greater benefits than it first appears. That said, the number of subject groups receiving external support is likely higher than it appears as well: two of the British parliamentarians interviewed made reference to outside assistance that had not been disclosed on the register.

The second set of figures in Table 5.2 identifies the number of APGs that had specified a monetary value for at least a portion of the external support they declared. The data indicate that the vast majority of British APGs with external support declare only in-kind assistance. In fact, the number of groups at Westminster registering monetary support has actually fallen in proportionate terms since 2001. As is discussed further in Chapter Eight, this decline may reflect the surge in support provided by charities, which tend to offer in-kind contributions as opposed to direct financial support.

However, while the proportion of groups reporting monetary support declined, the absolute value of the support declared increased dramatically. This increase was driven exclusively by subject groups, whose reported contributions jumped by more than two and a half fold over the period. Considering that the number of subject APGs reporting financial support rose only from 37 to 57, the average financing declared by subject groups increased substantially from £19,180 to £32,143. Therefore while proportionally fewer subject APGs reported monetary contributions, those that did received more support on average than was the case in 2001.

In terms of the support received by individual groups, in 2001 there was just one APG at Westminster, the Parliamentary Advisory Council on Transport Safety, which reported over £50,000 in income. By 2014 there were 16 such groups. These ranged from the Parliamentary Internet and Communications Technology Forum, which received £137,000 from 21 different corporations, to the Football Club APPG, which received exactly £50,000 from the utility company National Grid. All 16 were subject groups except for the APPG for China, which listed financing of £54,634, primarily from large corporations. However, the funding was not evenly distributed, with the top five groups, listed below in Table 5.3, accounting for a quarter of the
total by all groups. The distribution was also uneven by group type. Associate parliamentary groups (i.e. those that allow external actors to be full voting members) reported much higher funding on average than APPGs. There were also just eight inter-country APGs that declared financial support. The lowest value declared on the August 2014 registry was £1,500 for the *APPG for Social Mobility*.

**Table 5.3 – Five largest recipients of external support on the August 2014 APG registry, excluding the British-American Parliamentary Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Support declared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Internet and Communications Technology Forum</td>
<td>£131,768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All-Party Parliamentary Human Rights Group</td>
<td>£112,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPG for Unconventional Oil and Gas</td>
<td>£106,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPG on Population, Development and Reproductive Health</td>
<td>£97,024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPG on Corporate Governance</td>
<td>£78,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The support received by the 65 APGs that declared direct financial assistance in 2014 cannot be used to extrapolate the total value of the external support received by all APGs. However, it would seem safe to assume that assistance received by the 349 groups that reported in-kind contributions would be at least equal, and most likely greater, than the £1.9 million they reported. As such, the overall value of the external assistance provided to registered APGs in the UK is almost certainly in excess of £4 million, and perhaps much higher. Looking forward, the rule changes that took effect following Britain’s 2015 election require APGs to estimate the value of all in-kind contributions, meaning that it should soon be possible to get a more precise calculation of the overall value of the support received.35 However, as we will see below in the case of Scotland, the system’s success will hinge on whether external partners offer realistic assessments of the help they provide. Considerable external support will also still be received by the UK’s various unregistered APGs.

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35 A webscrape of the APG registry posted on 23 December 2015 found that the total value of both financial contributions to APGs and the estimated value of in-kind assistance was £4,156,732. This figure should be viewed with caution, however, as many groups had yet to re-register following the 2015 election, meaning that the total value would likely be closer to £5M.
In terms of the nature of the support received, there were 386 APGs that reported secretarial or administrative support on the August 2014 register, 49 that declared assistance for hospitality costs (receptions, dinners, awards ceremonies, etc.), 12 that listed travel support, and six that reported a contribution to support the preparation of a specific report or inquiry. This sharp gap between declarations of secretariat support and other types of assistance reflects the vagueness around the reporting of in-kind support that was discussed above, such that an external organization that provides secretariat services is also presumed to cover the hospitality, travel, or inquiry costs that an APG group might incur. The question then becomes what activities the group undertakes, and whether the secretariat sponsor places any limits on its support – neither of which can be readily determined from the registry. This ambiguity makes it very difficult to compare the capacity of different APGs, including their ability to engage with stakeholders, conduct research, and seek to influence policy.

An interesting trend in the UK is the emergence of APGs that are supported by purpose-built independent secretariat organizations (ISOs). Such groups tend to operate as large stakeholder-supported forums for a given industry or sector. The majority of these APGs, including the APPGs on Design and Innovation, Health, Manufacturing, and Skills and Employment, are managed by a not-for-profit company called Policy Connect (formerly known as Networking for Industry). It was founded in the 1990s by Labour MP Barry Sheerman to provide an independent body that could manage contributions from multiple external sponsors and provide impartial secretariat services. To ensure objectivity, the organization is governed by a 10 person board that includes experts from various policy fields. In addition to six registered APGs, Policy Connect also provides the secretariat for five unregistered APGs as well. These groups tend to be highly active, holding regular meetings and issuing frequent reports.

In addition to the stable of APGs managed by Policy Connect, three other groups have established their own dedicated ISOs to provide secretariat services using contributions from multiple donors. They are the APPG on Antisemitism, supported by the Parliamentary Committee Against Antisemitism Foundation; the All-Party Parliamentary Renewable and Sustainable Energy Group, supported by PRASEG Limited; and the Parliamentary Advisory Council on Transport Safety, which is supported by a registered charity of the same name. While it does not provide secretariat services itself, the APPG on Human Rights has also created the Parliamentary Human Rights Trust to receive and manage donations on behalf of the group in order to protect
its independence. The presence of such ISOs demonstrates politicians’ anxieties regarding their relations with external actors, and their desire to maintain independence by keeping them at arms’ length. It is also a reminder that those APGs with multiple funders are less likely to be captured by a particular interest than those with a single sponsor.

More than ten percent of the APGs registered in August 2014 (64) also received their secretariat support from lobby firms which were paid by their clients to provide such services. In many instances it can be more efficient for external organizations with little practical knowledge of parliament to work through these firms to engage with parliamentarians. However, such arrangements tend to raise greater ethical concerns than instances where external actors interact directly with APGs. In particular, observers fear that lobbyists may also seek to advance the interests of their other clients during their interactions with parliamentarians. As described in Chapter Two, there have also been repeated alarms raised over APGs that receive secretariat support from lobbyists without disclosing on whose behalf it has been provided. Yet despite such concerns, there were still 14 APGs on the August 2014 registry – over one-fifth of those supported by lobby firms – that failed to meet this requirement. These groups, which included the APPGs on Bahrain, Genital Mutilation, Rail in the Southwest, and (somewhat ironically) Corporate Social Responsibility, covered a wide range of topics, suggesting that the failure to report was not concentrated among any particular policy sector or type of actor. As with other secretariat providers, the value of the support provided by lobby firms is not disclosed.

In sum, the external support offered to British APGs can be extensive but also highly variable. In some cases this support is easy to identify. A clear case in point is the Parliamentary Advisory Council on Transport Safety (PACTS), which is supported by an ISO with charitable status. The organization has several permanent employees and is funded by contributions from external partners active in the transport sector, including municipalities and major corporations like Shell Oil and Volvo. These resources allow it to furnish group members with extensive logistical, research, and communications support. However, for the majority of the APGs at Westminster, the only detail reported is that a given organization provides secretariat services to the group – support that could range from a full-time staff person to a few hours of service per year from employees with many other responsibilities. Such variation in capacity is also found among those groups that are run from MPs’ offices: some devote considerable staff time to operating APGs, others have fewer resources to spare. While the new disclosure requirements for in-kind support
should make such differences more evident, observers must still be careful not to assume that an APG is either well-resourced or largely unsupported, but to investigate the operation of each.

As will be discussed further in Chapter Eight, it should also be noted that the type of support given to APGs varies with the nature of the supporting organization. In particular, the majority of corporations that support British APGs do so as part of a broader set of donors that each make relatively small financial contributions. Indeed, while 78 APGs reported corporate support in August 2014, there were just 14 that had a single corporation as their only sponsor. Conversely, of the 184 APGs that declared assistance from charities in August 2014, there were 121 that had a single charity as their only contributor – all but one of which served as group secretariats. As such individual charities were generally better positioned to shape APG decisions than their corporate counterparts, who were more likely to be just one of several actors engaging with a group.

3.2 Scotland

The distribution and nature of the outside support received by the APGs at Holyrood provide an interesting contrast to the situation at Westminster. On the one hand, the inclusion of external stakeholders as full group members means that APGs at Holyrood tend to be more engaged with external stakeholders than their Westminster counterparts, and there are just a handful of groups that lack an external secretary or secretariat. Yet on the other hand, the fact that most Scottish APGs serve primarily as forums for discussions among stakeholders means that they tend to operate with far less assistance than is required by British APGs, especially the more active groups that conduct inquiries or hold award ceremonies. There are no Scottish APGs that enjoy full-time dedicated staff, and none have created independent secretariat organizations to manage their affairs. Thus, the external support available to Scottish APGs is more broadly distributed relative to Westminster, but much less extensive in terms of the assistance received by any given APG.

Table 5.4 gives a snapshot of the external support declared by APGs at Holyrood at the end of the Parliament’s first term in 2003 and again in 2014. As described in Chapter Two, the threshold for reporting external assistance is much lower at Holyrood than Westminster (£500 per year from a single source versus £1500), and may APGs actually report contributions below this threshold as well. APGs also must not only report that in-kind assistance has been provided,
but estimate the value of the support as well. Surprisingly, despite their large external membership, Scottish APGs are less likely than their counterparts at Westminster to declare external support. Indeed, the number of groups doing so actually fell over time, such that by 2014 fewer than half of the APGs at Holyrood (39 of 88) reported receiving outside support, a figure well below the two-thirds of British APGs that received such assistance. However, in both 2003 and 2014 the vast majority of the groups that did not declare any external support also listed outside actors in the position of group secretary or secretariat. This suggests that these actors provided assistance, but that the support they furnished did not hit the disclosure threshold. If these external secretaries are added to those listed in the financial disclosures, then the proportion of Scottish APGs receiving outside assistance jumps above 80 percent in 2003 and to nearly 100 percent in 2014.

**Table 5.4 – External support declared by Scottish APGs in 2003 and 2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number reporting external support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Inter-country</em></td>
<td>1 (50%)</td>
<td>1 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Subject</em></td>
<td>25 (53%)</td>
<td>38 (52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>26 (53%)</td>
<td>39 (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number reporting external support or external secretary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Inter-country</em></td>
<td>2 (100%)</td>
<td>12 (80%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Subject</em></td>
<td>38 (81%)</td>
<td>70 (95%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40 (82%)</td>
<td>86 (98%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total value of monetary support reported</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Inter-country</em></td>
<td>£2,500 (1)</td>
<td>£1,140 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Subject</em></td>
<td>£80,864 (25)</td>
<td>£100,764 (38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>£83,364 (26)</td>
<td>£101,904 (39)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

36 The 2003 declarations were obtained from a copy of the Parliament’s register of APGs that was captured by the Internet Archive on 2 April 2003. Webscraping software was used to extract the information into a dataset for analysis. The 2014 data were gathered from the most recent annual reports available as of September 2014. For most groups this covered the period from March or April 2013 to February or March 2014. For newly formed groups that had yet to file annual reports, the disclosures in their registration documents were used instead.

37 The 2003 data does not include the £12,425 in conference fees that the *CPG on Cancer* declared from attendees at its Scotland Against Cancer conference. However, it does include the £17,600 in corporate sponsorships from 10 pharmaceutical companies that the group received for the event.
Yet while Scottish APGs are less likely to report external support than those in the UK, the same distribution of reporting between subject and inter-country groups is still present, with inter-country groups being substantially less likely to report any assistance. Indeed, the value of the support declared by the inter-country APGs actually declined between 2003 and 2014 even though the number of groups in operation jumped dramatically over the period from just two to 15. However, Scotland remains distinct from the UK in that there are no APGs at Holyrood that receive secretariat services from either lobbyists or ISOs.

In terms of the amount of outside assistance provided to Scottish APGs, Table 5.5 lists the five groups that declared the most external support in the year prior to September 2014. While these groups are comparatively well funded relative to their Scottish peers – and to a good many APGs in the UK as well – only the CPG on Rural Policy would crack the list of the top 50 best funded APGs at Westminster. In keeping with this trend, the total level of external support declared by all Scottish APGs came to just £101,904, only five percent of the £1.94M registered by groups at Westminster over the same period – a proportion that would fall much further if British APGs were similarly required to estimate the value of the in-kind support they receive, and if all travel support provided to APG members at Westminster were declared on the APG registry.

### Table 5.5 – Five largest recipients of external support among Scottish APGs as of September 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Support declared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CPG on Rural Policy</td>
<td>£8,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPG on Children And Young People</td>
<td>£7,770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPG on Adult Learning</td>
<td>£6,268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPG on Rare Diseases</td>
<td>£5,952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPG on Visual Impairment</td>
<td>£5,876</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, there is reason to believe that the support received by the APGs at Holyrood is greater than it appears. With its tougher disclosure rules, the Scottish registry theoretically offers a more comprehensive overview of the support available to the Parliament’s APGs than its British equivalent. Yet the reliability of the data is undermined by the inconsistency of the reporting. A case in point is the CPG on Cancer, which in 2003 declared £21,720 in external funding, consisting of £4,120 from Cancer Research UK for secretariat services, and £17,600 from 10 pharmaceutical companies who sponsored the group’s “Scotland Against Cancer” conference.
These contributions made the *CPG on Cancer* by far the best supported APG at Holyrood, accounting for over a quarter of the total funding declared by all groups combined in that year. In later years, however, the group’s annual report did not include the corporate sponsorships received for the conference. For instance, the group’s 2012 annual return notes that 190 people attended that year’s instalment of Scotland Against Cancer (Cross-Party Group on Cancer, 2012). Yet while the annual return lists £2,500 in secretarial support from Cancer Research UK as the group’s only benefit, the conference report indicates that the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry was the event’s “Gold Sponsor,” while pharmaceutical firms Genomic Health, Janssen, and Novartis were “Silver Sponsors” (Cancer Research UK, 2012). Even more surprising is that neither the 2015 Scottish Cancer Conference nor its sponsors are mentioned at all in the *CPG on Cancer*’s 2015 annual return, even though the group is listed as one of the “hosts” for the event on the conference webpage (Cancer Research UK, 2015; Cross-Party Group on Cancer, 2015). In contrast, the external support received by the *APPG on Cancer* at Westminster for its annual Britain Against Cancer conference is routinely reported on the UK APG registry. This change in reporting practice by the Scottish group may reflect the criticism that such corporate support received in past (Peterkin, 2002).

Additional gaps in the reporting system can also be seen in the wide variations in the estimates provided for secretariat costs. In 2014, the highest secretariat cost belonged to the *CPG on Children and Young People*, which reported £5,000 worth of staff time from Youthlink Scotland and a further £2,500 from Children in Scotland in support of seven meetings. The *CPG on Rural Policy* was a close runner up, declaring that the staff of Rural Policy Centre provided £6,000 in service for five meetings. At the other extreme, Oil and Gas UK estimated that its efforts to organize two meetings of the *CPG on Oil and Gas* had a value of just £340. Given that Oil and Gas UK’s Scottish operations are based in Aberdeen and that it also prepares the minutes for each meeting, it would be quite surprising if the figure fully captured the transportation and labour costs incurred in providing the secretariat. Indeed, the association reported spending nearly double that value (£604.35) on catering for those two meetings. Overall, the lack of financial disclosure by the majority of CPGs means either that there is a small number of groups

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38 In 2015 the event was renamed as “The Scottish Cancer Conference.”
with comparatively well-resourced secretariats, or a large number of groups that under-estimate the value of the support they receive. On balance, the latter possibility seems more likely.

Although the value of the external support received by Scottish APGs appears to be greater than that declared on the registry, it also remains the case that the best resourced APGs Holyrood receive just a fraction of the support enjoyed by the best resourced groups at Westminster. This lower level of external funding reflects the more modest ambitions of most Scottish APGs, which generally do not attempt the kind of profile raising, report production, or policy activism that is more common among British APGs. Scottish APGs also are less likely to engage in international travel. As discussed further in Chapter Eight, a review of the organizations that support British and Scottish APGs suggests that this lower level of funding may also to some extent result from the characteristics of the Parliament itself and the devolution settlement that created it. The most notable difference in the composition of external APG support in Scotland is the near absence of corporate donors, which make up a third of the contributors to APGs at Westminster, but just five percent of those at Holyrood. At first glance this gap could potentially reflect the fact that corporations wishing to join British APGs must typically pay a multi-thousand pound membership fee, while those in Scotland can attend meetings at no cost. However, this low level of corporate involvement also exists in other aspects of APG participation, with corporations making up just 11 percent of Scottish APGs’ organizational members in 2014, while charities compose 35 percent. As such, it appears that corporations are generally less intent on engaging with the Scottish political system via the medium offered by APGs.

3.3 Canada

Far less information is available regarding the financial support provided to Canadian APGs as compared to those in the UK or Scotland, making it impossible to determine either the total value received or its distribution among various groups. Of the Parliament’s 16 officially recognized inter-country groups, 12 are classified as “parliamentary associations” and have their secretariat and travel costs provided by the Parliament itself. The remaining four “interparliamentary groups” receive only administrative support. All other Canadian APGs face the same struggle for resources as those in other jurisdictions, and the majority have established some form of support relationships with external organizations. As shown in Appendix II, what data are available
indicates that just under two thirds of the 39 subject APGs operating in the 2011-2015 Parliament had at least one outside partner providing some form of assistance, a figure very similar to that in the UK. Of these, the majority (17 of 26) were supported by NGOs, such as the Canadian Men’s Health Foundation and the National Association of Friendship Centres. The rest were sponsored by industry associations like the Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association or the Canadian Steel Producers Association. No Canadian sponsor was found that had fully outsourced its engagement with an APG to a lobby firm, although some did engage lobby firms to help organize specific events, such as receptions.

Like those in the UK, most of Canada’s unrecognized inter-country APGs typically enjoyed support from either the partner countries’ embassies, diaspora groups in Canada, or both. Some also formed ties with businesses from the partner country, such as the annual “Taste of Belgium” beer events co-sponsored by the Canada-Belgium Parliamentary Friendship Group, Belgian-owned Labatt breweries, and the Belgian Embassy in Ottawa (Embassy Newspaper, 2013, 2014). Although no data are available regarding the cost of assistance provided for events in Canada, the requirement for MPs to disclose sponsored travel allows for some assessment of the support APGs receive from foreign countries and diaspora communities. For instance, in 2012 the Dutch Embassy in Ottawa paid $11,750 in travel and accommodation expenses for a visit to the Hague by six MPs from the Canada-Netherlands Parliamentary Friendship Group (Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, 2013). Unfortunately, the disclosure of sponsored travel is left to MPs themselves, and some fail to note when a trip is related to an APG. A case in point is MP Gerry Breitkreuz, who stated that the purpose of his 2012 trip to Germany was to “Meet with Bundestag Members.” In contrast, MP Robert Gougen gave the purpose for the same trip as “Canada-German Interparliamentary Association delegation.”

The level of external assistance received varies greatly between groups, with some enjoying extensive and ongoing support, while others had only one-time contributions. At one extreme, the Health Research Caucus is fully supported by Research Canada, which pays for several events each year, including catering, travel expenses for speakers from outside of Ottawa, and staff time to organize the events. Conversely, the Canadian Cancer Society’s engagement with

39 Several of the others likely benefited from external support as well, but did not publicize it.
the *Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care* was limited to a specific grant to cover the cost of publishing hard copies of the group’s report on palliative care.

Some of those groups without an external secretariat, including the *All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity* and the *Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care*, have sought to compensate by pooling contributions from the office budgets of member parliamentarians to hire dedicated staff or interns. This approach is similar to those employed at the US Congress whereby different members pay caucus staff each month (Ringe et al., 2013), or where caucus members share their own staff to maximize their capacity to conduct research and organize group activities (Hammond, 1998). The major advantage of these tactics is that it increases the capacity of an APG without making it reliant on external funds.

As in the UK, two Canadian APGs have also experimented with different models to manage support from outside organizations in an arm’s length fashion. As part of its initiative to create an international network of APGs dealing with Genocide Prevention, in 2007 the British charity the Aegis Trust offered support to the *APPGPGOCA* to hire an intern to assist with operating the group. To ensure there was no impression of undue influence, the group made an arrangement with the Montreal Institute of Genocide Studies (an academic institute at Concordia University) whereby the Institute would manage the funds on the group’s behalf and take part in the selection of the intern. The arrangement lasted for several years until the Aegis Trust ended the grant.

In 2007, the *Parliamentary Outdoors Caucus* also voted to create the Canadian Outdoor Heritage Foundation to “act as a liaison between the Canadian hunting, fishing, trapping and recreational shooting community, related business sectors, and the Outdoor Caucus” (Parliamentary Outdoors Caucus, 2007). This body was explicitly modelled after the Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation which supports the *Congressional Sportsmen’s Caucus* – itself the model for the *Outdoors Caucus*. The foundation was later renamed the Outdoor Caucus Association of Canada and remains active. While the *Outdoors Caucus* itself has not taken formal positions on government policies and legislation, the Outdoor Caucus Association has been more vocal. In 2010, it issued a statement supporting the abolition of the federal gun registry and calling for the funds saved to be reallocated to fish and wildlife conservation (Outdoor Caucus Association of Canada, 2010).
The APGs in Canada therefore appear to occupy a mid-point between the groups in Scotland and those in the UK. Individual groups – including some that lack formal parliamentary funding – may enjoy more resources than their Scottish counterparts, particularly when support for international travel is considered. They also show further signs of institutional development, with some groups seeking to find ways of managing external support in a fashion that ensures greater independence. Yet there are no Canadian groups that would match the value of external support enjoyed by the better resourced British APGs. As is the case with the APGs in Scotland, this lower level of support would appear to reflect the more modest ambitions of most Canadian APGs, the majority of which act more as forums for information dissemination and policy discussion.

3.4 Ontario

All subject groups at Queen’s Park except for the Trent Severn Caucus also have external partner organizations that support their activities. Indeed, the external partners are the driving force behind activities of the Cement and Lung Health caucuses, which lack defined executives and were more overtly managed by their external partners.

A similar external drive can be found in the All-Party Cycling Caucus, although it also stands apart from the others on several fronts. The caucus was established on the advice of the international lobbying firm Brown and Cohen Public Affairs as part of a broader government relations campaign seeking improved cycling infrastructure and safety that was prepared for the Share the Road Cycling Coalition, a provincial advocacy group (Brown & Cohen Public Affairs, 2014). The suggestion to create the caucus was directly inspired by the success of the APPG on Cycling in the UK, and Brown and Cohen went on to win an award for the broader campaign from the Canadian Public Relations Society. Share the Road became the Cycling Caucus’ external partner, although relations between the two became somewhat more complicated when Eleanor McMahon, Share the Road’s founder and Chief Executive, became a candidate for the Liberal Party for the 2014 provincial election. She resigned from Share the Road after winning a seat in the legislature and has become an active member of the Cycling Caucus itself. No other examples were found in any of the four jurisdictions where external advocates won election and then participated in an APG that they had previously supported.
4 Conflict within APGs

APGs can be affected by a range of internal conflicts. Most visible are the heated battles over leadership positions that occasionally emerge between parliamentarians, with support for rival candidates often breaking along partisan lines. Though less common, there is also the potential for conflict between an APG’s parliamentary members and its external stakeholders. These tensions typically revolve around the policy recommendations being advanced by the group, or a belief among external members that an APG should be more assertive in pushing the government for change. In some cases, such tensions can also split along party lines as well, with those from one party supporting certain stakeholders.

Partisan tensions can also emerge over policy issues. At their worst, such tensions may prevent APGs from forming in the first place. This failure to launch is most evident in Canada and Ontario, where sharp policy divisions frequently lead legislators to form intra-party caucuses on given policy issues instead of APGs. However, policy conflicts do not always break along party lines – a reality that can actually be more challenging as those with different agendas attempt to influence group activities, leading group executives to at times seek to limit opportunities for member input. To overcome these barriers, many groups deliberately choose to restrict the scope of their activities or the issues they address to maintain a cross-party consensus.

Each of these axes of conflict is explored further below. Not surprisingly, the greatest range of conflict is found in the UK, where the greater tolerance for dissent and ideological heterogeneity within each party leads to more potential for conflicts between rival camps of parliamentarians that each contain members of different parties.

4.1 Competition for leadership

Reflecting the lack of engagement by members, many APGs experience little turnover among their executives, and when they do there is typically little competition for positions available. In fact, the Speakers’ Working Group that studied the APG system in the UK recommended the creation of term limits for APG leadership positions in order to encourage turnover (Straw et al., 2012). However, on some occasions intense conflicts can emerge, particularly for the post of group chair. This conflict can result from partisan tension or personal ambition, although distinguishing between the two can often be challenging. As one British parliamentarian put it,
“Quite often it can be that they remove some guy who wants to be [chair]. Then to make allies in his own grouping, he’s saying, oh, ‘it’s just a right-wing takeover, or left-wing takeover,’ when it’s nothing of the sort. They probably just thought the guy was a dick” (confidential interview, November 2012).

In both Canada and the UK, instances were found where members of a newly elected governing party sought to seize control of APGs that were led by members of the former governing party. Several of those interviewed at Westminster mentioned that there had been a “coup” within the APPG on China whereby a large number of Conservative parliamentarians arrived in order to ensure the victory of the Conservative candidate for chair. The action was reported to have been caused by the belief that the leadership of such a high profile group should be in the hands of the governing party. The Labour MP who was removed from the position was reportedly quite upset by the outcome and there were fears that Labour parliamentarians would attempt to retaliate by taking control of another group. This fear in turn led Conservative MPs to receive instructions to attend the APPG on Azerbaijan to ensure the victory of the Conservative incumbent (confidential interview, November 2012).

At the Canadian Parliament, after forming government in 2006, members of the Conservative party were accused of joining the various parliament-supported inter-country APGs en masse to ensure that one of their own members was selected as chair (Vongdouangchanh, 2006). During this campaign, the membership of the Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group jumped from 32 to 158. Liberal MPs alleged that the government had directed the initiative as part of a “concerted effort” to seize control the associations. In response the Conservative Whip admitted to encouraging MPs to join the groups, but denied that there was a deliberate takeover plan. Nevertheless, similar concerns emerged in 2011 when all of the executive positions on the Canada-Israel Parliamentary Friendship Group were filled by MPs from the governing Conservative Party, casting doubt on the all-party nature of the group and further raising concerns from the opposition (Berthiaume, 2011).

Conflict across party lines was also found among Canada’s unrecognized APGs. In 2007, Liberal MP Ruby Dhalla went so far as to raise a question of privilege against Conservative MP Deepak Obhrai on the grounds that he had physically intimidated and threatened her during a meeting where officers were elected for the Canada-India Parliamentary Friendship Group (Dhalla,
Ms. Dhalla reported that the incident occurred after she raised a point of order at the meeting despite Mr. Obhrai’s objections. In response, Mr. Obhrai claimed that Ms. Dhalla was “hurt” that she did win the election for group chair, and “blamed” him for the outcome (Obhrai, 2007). The Speaker does not appear to have ever issued a ruling on Ms. Dhalla’s question.

Although less dramatic, another opposition MP described having done the work to organize the initial meeting of a new inter-country APG, only to have a mass of Conservatives arrive at the session and elect one of their co-partisans as chair (confidential interview, December 2013).

While no similar examples were found in Ontario or Scotland, this conflict over leadership positions within Canadian and British APGs demonstrates the significance with which APGs are viewed by both parliamentarians and political parties more broadly. The fact that parties will attempt to orchestrate the takeover of certain groups suggests that they must have some meaningful impact on policy outcomes, or at the very least the potential to embarrass the government or hinder its agenda. Individual parliamentarians also appear to believe that it is worth expending considerable time and energy in the pursuit of APG executive positions, suggesting that substantial benefits accrue to APG leaders.

4.2 Conflict with stakeholders

Just as there can be tensions among parliamentarians over how an APG should address a given policy issue, divisions over group strategy and direction can also emerge between parliamentarians and the external stakeholders involved with a group. In most cases, such conflicts emerge because parliamentarians are reluctant to be as assertive in pushing for policy change as the stakeholders would wish. These tensions are especially evident at Holyrood, where external actors are included as full APG members, and typically outnumber the parliamentary membership by a significant margin. In particular, external members can be confused over the place of APGs within the Scottish Parliament and overestimate their capacity to influence policy or legislative decisions. As one MSP described,

So on some subjects it can be difficult to handle challenging situations or when people don’t have the same expectation of what the group is going to achieve. It’s also sometimes necessary to keep on restating that it’s not a committee of Parliament, that it’s not a part of the Parliament’s formal decision making process. There will be people who will maybe go along to a CPG and either think that that’s going to lead to some immediate policy shift from the government or that they will be able to call witnesses or call ministers to answer questions. You need
to be clear that it’s something informal, that it’s not part of the formal machinery of the Parliament and that there are limits to what it can achieve (confidential interview, December 2012).

As described in the section on group demise in the next chapter, the CPGs on *Autism Spectrum Disorder* and *Myalgic Encephalomyelitis* both disbanded following such conflicts between the MSP members and external stakeholders.

While tensions over policy activism appear to be most common source of conflict between parliamentarians and stakeholders, divisions can also form over which organization serves as the secretariat to a given group. For instance, immediately after the founding of the *APPG on Islamophobia* in November 2010, *Daily Telegraph* journalist Andrew Gilligan published a blog post alleging that its secretariat organization, iENGAGE, had radical “Islamist” views (Gilligan, 2010b). The organization was quickly removed as the secretariat in December. However, after lobbying by iENGAGE, it was reinstated by the parliamentary membership in early 2011, prompting the Group’s Chair and Vice-Chair, Conservative MP Kris Hopkins and Labour Peer Lord Janner, to resign in protest (Gilligan, 2010a, 2011).

Criticism of the relationship with iENGAGE continued, eventually prompting the new executive to ask Chris Allen, an expert on Islamophobia at the University of Birmingham, to investigate “what criteria a group should meet if it is to be a secretariat organization” (Allen, 2011). The resulting report upheld several of the criticisms against iENGAGE, leading members to vote 60-2 to replace the organization in July 2011 (Bright, 2011). A large number of Conservative MPs, including members of Conservative Friends of Israel, an intra-party group specifically attended the meeting to ensure the motion to remove iENGAGE succeeded (confidential interview, November 2012).

In some cases concerns over allowing one organization or another to serve as a group secretariat can give rise to the creation of an independent secretariat organization to ensure that the group is not beholden to any one interest. In others, members who are concerned that an APG has become too close to one actor may set up a rival group, as when the *All-Party Parliamentary Save the Pub* group formed following concerns the *APPG on Beer* was too much under the sway of the major brewing companies.
4.3 Partisan dynamics and the limits of APG activity

The conflicts over group leadership described above appear to be more a result of personal or partisan ambition rather than concrete policy disputes. However, tensions often emerge within APGs over what policy directions to support – tensions that lead many groups to limit the scope of their ambition in order to maintain unity among members. For instance, Ringe et al. (2013) note that while the members of the Congressional Caucus on Parkinson’s Disease all wish to help those with the condition, some would support the use of stem cells to treat the disease, while others would strongly object to that policy option. As such, the group avoided making policy prescriptions. Likewise, Morgan (1979) identified three functions performed by APGs at Westminster: organizing opinion by allowing members to receive and exchange information; connecting parliamentarians with outside actors; and finally developing new policy and legislation. Of these, he argued that the last was by far the most difficult, with parliamentarians needing to maintain cross-party consensus while managing to attract government support.

At the most basic level, there must be a certain degree of consensus on an issue across party lines before an APG can even be established. Recognizing this challenge, the rules governing APGs in Scotland specifically allow groups to apply for an exemption from the requirement for all-party participation in the event that no parliamentarian can be found from one political grouping. The clause was first utilized to allow the formation of the CPG on Nuclear Disarmament despite the lack of a Conservative MSP (Scotland. Parliament. Standards Committee, 2003).

The role of partisan tensions in hindering APG formation is most evident in Canada and Ontario, where many issues are addressed by intra-party caucuses rather than by overarching groups encompassing members from all parties. For some topics, such as the automotive industry, each party at the Canadian Parliament actually has its own separate caucus (Burgess, 2013). However, the number and diversity of intra-party caucuses is typically the greatest within the governing party. For instance, in the 41st Parliament (2011 to 2015), parliamentarians from the governing Conservatives formed a wide range of internal caucuses including those on:

- Energy
- Financial services
- Forestry
- Grains and oilseeds
- Housing and construction
• Hunting and angling
• Law enforcement (also referred to as the “Police Caucus”)
• Marine
• Mining and pipelines
• Post-secondary education
• Rural
• Trucking industry
• Wine

In some cases the formation of these intra-party caucuses is simply a product of distribution of geography and professional backgrounds across the parties. For example, almost all of the seats from the wine-producing regions in Canada happened to be held by Conservative MPs, and all of the former police officers in Parliament were elected under the Conservative banner (MacLeod, 2015). In most instances though, respondents indicated that the decision to create intra-party caucuses reflected either the differences in policy positions between the parties on the subject in question, or the desire for a more fulsome and politically strategic discussion than parliamentarians felt was possible in the presence of other parties (confidential interviews, November 2012 and February 2014). These realities are accepted by the external stakeholders who engage with such intra-party caucuses. When specifically asked about combining the separate Conservative, Liberal, and NDP auto industry caucuses into an all-party group, the head of the Canadian Motor Vehicle Manufacturing Association replied that, “I think when you look at the dynamics between political parties and what not, I think it would be their preference and probably our preference to talk to them on a party basis” (Burgess, 2013). One of the lobbyists interviewed similarly appreciated the greater frankness of the dialogue that was possible through an intra-party caucus as opposed to an APG:

anything that would bring a group [of MPs] together to give them a window on the industry… in a more detailed way, and without quite frankly the politics of multiparty dynamics, was a good thing. Because then the MPs in the room could ask the questions without worrying about what their opponents might think, read into the question, or even have worded it, or if they display a lack of understanding… So if you strip away the committee dynamic, you know the cameras on, the microphones on, all the parties listening to every word, it’s less about scoring points and more about, ‘Well tell me’… Nobody’s going to come back and haunt you with what you’re saying or what they are saying. That’s the benefit, from my perspective of it, with it being a single party caucus (confidential interview, November 2013).
While not as extensive, a similar network of intra-party caucuses exists at the Ontario legislature, with the governing Liberal party having its own automotive and rural caucuses, while the opposition Progressive Conservative party was home to a caucus on nuclear power. However, the creation of intra-party groupings for focused policy issues does not appear to happen in either the UK or Scotland. As discussed further in Chapter Nine, this greater use of intra-party caucuses reflects the lesser ability of parliamentarians in the two Canadian cases to separate their roles as party members and as legislators. It also suggests the greater involvement of backbench parliamentarians in the development of party policy (Garner and Letki, 2005).

Even when APGs do form in Canada, cross-party dynamics can still be very challenging. Many Canadian APGs, including the Canada-Palestine Parliamentary Friendship Group, the All-Party Women’s Caucus, and the Canadian Association of Parliamentarians for Population Development, have struggled to attract Conservative members. Indeed for much of the 41st Parliament, the latter two relied on the involvement of Conservative Senators (Nancy Ruth and Raynell Andreychuk, respectively) to achieve participation from all parties.

The separatist Bloc Québécois has also had a fraught relationship with a number of Canadian APGs. While active participants in many inter-country groups, BQ MPs did not participate in the Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care out of the belief that the federal Parliament should not interfere with provincial jurisdiction over health care. The party’s MPs also withdrew from the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism on the grounds that the conception of anti-Semitism adopted by the group was overly broad and would capture what the BQ members felt were legitimate criticisms of Israeli government policy.

One method that APGs across jurisdictions employ to avoid such partisan tensions is to deliberately limit the scope of their ambitions. In this vein, many APGs at the US Congress steer clear of policy advocacy altogether and instead concentrate solely on information exchange.

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40 British parties do have a greater range of organized factions, some of which may produce research reports. Moreover, British parties may also have intra-party organizations for inter-country cooperation, such as the Conservative Friends of Israel. However, such factions and intra-party organizations are typically open to all party members, not just parliamentarians.

41 Conservative MP Wai Young later joined the Canadian Association of Parliamentarians for Population Development, bringing the Conservatives to two of 43 members.
(Hammond, 1998; Ringe et al., 2013). The same behaviour was found in the legislatures in this study, with the Canadian Parliament’s All-Party Climate Change Caucus deliberately choosing not to make policy recommendations, but to focus solely on education and information sharing. It also met in camera in an effort to create a less confrontational environment between parliamentarians. At Westminster, the All-Party Parliamentary Health Group similarly eschewed any policy formation in favour of providing a platform for policy discussion with external stakeholders under Chatham House rules. This approach enabled the group to serve as a focal point for debate and engagement during the passage of the highly divisive reforms to the National Health Service introduced by the coalition government.

Other groups stop short of avoiding all policy advocacy, choosing instead to focus on areas of consensus between members of different parties. Typically the boundaries for cross-party agreements are set by the members of the governing party, a trend observed by Walkland over 50 years ago in his study of the UK’s Parliamentary and Scientific Committee:

> British government is party government, and the all-party nature of the Committee means that it cannot operate effectively if too much in advance of dominant government opinion, although within these limits its influence has at times been considerable, and it has escaped the lifelessness which tends to be the common lot of all-party bodies. But without official standing and acting solely as an interest group, its success depends on the prevailing political climate, and the Committee's interests have always emerged in fields where there is basic unanimity between the parties (1964: 314).

In Canada, the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity had a very difficult time drafting a joint statement on the conflict in Darfur in 2007. Some opposition parliamentarians wanted the group to urge the government to set an international example by committing more resources – including Canadian peacekeepers – to help resolve the situation. Those from the governing party wanted to avoid open criticism of the existing Canadian policy, and were particularly sensitive around the question of deploying Canadian troops. In the end, the statement released was vaguely worded, stating that “All-Party Group encourages the Government of Canada to provide military support to a UN force” without specifying the commitment of troops (All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity, 2007). After that challenging experience, the group began to focus more on holding information sessions with civil society organizations, providing them with opportunities to tell parliamentarians what actions they thought should be
taken in different situations. The recommendations from these consultations were then prepared in summary reports and circulated to parliamentarians, enabling the group to distribute the organizations’ calls for greater Canadian engagement without having to explicitly endorse them.

The parliamentarians involved with the Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care similarly had to navigate such partisan boundaries in their report on palliative care, with opposition members seeking more assertive recommendations, especially on the question of funding, while those on the governing side sought to ensure the report was not overly critical, but more collegial (confidential interviews, March and November 2013). One of the MPs involved described the process this way:

The report reflects that balance [of views between the parties]. Absolutely. I mean… it didn’t come across in a way that set out to embarrass government. You recall that for a number of years we were minority government. So every committee that I was a part of, every standing committee, it was quite clear that the opposition – NDP and Liberals – would align their forces to do anything they could to embarrass government. So if I want to be part of an ad hoc group, that I’m dealing on a voluntary basis, I’m going to be sure that that piece is not there, or I’m not going to be part of it. It’s a simple as that. And the opposition members want to advance their cause, they realize that as well. This negotiating – I don’t want to use compromise, that’s not a good word. It’s adjusting their expectations and being realistic. They might’ve wanted to be here [raises hand high]. Without us working together they would have been here [lowers hand towards the floor]. With us working together we got here [puts hand between the points, but closer to the top]. And that’s politics, the art of the possible (confidential interview, March 2013).

Importantly, this kind of negotiation or limitation of APG activities does not render the groups politically neutral. Indeed, in the examples above both the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity and the Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care remained focused on either changing government policy or at least circulating ideas about how it could be improved. Instead, the APG format enabled parliamentarians to pursue policy change in a less partisan fashion. One Canadian MP described the arrangement this way:

So all party caucuses are always to the opposition parties’ advantage because it gives us an opportunity to talk to the government in a way that we would not ordinarily be able to do. And it often gives external organizations a mechanism to get to the government in a way that they couldn’t ordinarily do, in a less confrontational, less partisan approach. So the objective underlying this, whether
people will acknowledge it or not, is to influence government policy. But that is always an unacknowledged objective, because they [government MPs] would not join these caucuses if it was explicitly stated objective (confidential interview, April 2013).

Canadian parliamentarians from the governing party were also very sensitive about opposition parliamentarians who criticized Canadian policies while travelling as part of inter-parliamentary delegations (confidential interviews, December 2013; February 2014). Most of the time though, members were able to present a united front around the national interest, which increased the effectiveness of their engagement with officials in other countries. As one active participant observed:

That’s always fascinating to see especially when you see the hyper-partisanship in Question Period… Often it’s very hard to see in meetings if people can identify who is from what party. And that makes perfect sense as best you can you try to sing from the same songbook. It makes much more impact on your host or the people you’re meeting if you can carry the same message. There are certain issues where it’s not going to happen, at which point usually the… delegation chair will say on this issue I’m going to let the representative from each party explain his or her parties’ position on this issue. But again, for many, many issues they all are united (confidential interview, November 2013).

While inter-party tensions do not hamper APG formation in Scotland to the same extent seen in Canada, several respondents stressed that groups at Holyrood tended not to be partisan in the sense of challenging government policy. One MSP particularly lamented the breakdown of cross-party collaboration in formal legislative committees, but reported that cooperation was still possible in APGs provided that the groups limited their focus: “Previously the government was in the minority so that helped facilitate more of a cross-party thing [on committees], because they had to engage with the other parties, where now they don’t [since the SNP won a majority in 2011 election]. So it’s not working as well now. But at the level of the CPGs it still works very well. It doesn’t tend to be political because it tends to be about practical things, about interaction with civil society” (confidential interview, December 2012). This focus on non-confrontational interactions between MSPs and external stakeholders is visible in the relatively low number of APGs that issue policy reports or engage with the media. Where possible, the APGs at Holyrood also try to ensure that any policy suggestions advanced by groups are delivered or openly supported by members of the governing party. For instance, at the CPG on Heart Disease meeting that I attended on 28 November 2012, the group convenor, Labour MSP Helen Eadie, was very pleased when MSP Dennis Robertson, the vice-convenor and a member of the
governing party, volunteered to lodge a parliamentary motion publicizing the group’s new “Stroke Charter.” Eadie noted that such motions were better received by the government when put forward by fellow SNP members.

Of the four jurisdictions, the APGs in the UK demonstrate the greatest capacity and willingness to openly criticize existing government policy. This trend is evident not only in the larger number of reports prepared by British APGs, but also in the number of groups that actively use parliamentary tools or the media to push for policy change over the long-term. While several examples could be provided, such as the APPGs on European Reform or Fair Fuels, perhaps the clearest case of such campaigning can be found in the APPG on Hunger and Food Poverty. The group was founded in 2013 to explore the rising use of food banks across the UK. In early 2014 it launched an inquiry into food bank use, using a letter in The Guardian to publicize its call for evidence (Field and Thorton, 2014). It also set a goal of publishing the inquiry’s findings before the end of the year in hopes of influencing the major parties’ manifestos for the 2015 election.

The group met its target, publishing the report in December 2014. The document made 77 recommendations on a wide range of issues, including calls for supermarkets to give unsold food to the poor and for utility companies to reduce the fees charged to low-income households that must choose between food and heat. However, it also identified changes to the benefits system as the major cause behind the growth of food bank use, and placed particular focus on the increased “sanctions” introduced by the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government. As the report stated:

Benefit-related problems was [sic] the single biggest reason given for food bank referrals by almost every food bank that presented evidence to us. The Inquiry is concerned that there are avoidable problems occurring in the administration of social security benefits, which have a particularly detrimental impact on poor and vulnerable claimants… Whilst the Inquiry endorses the need for conditionality in the welfare state, and supports the application of sanctions in the benefits system where these are appropriate, we had evidence submitted to us questioning how fairly they are being applied in some cases… We heard evidence that the sometimes inconsistent application of sanctions appears to affect particularly vulnerable groups, such as those who may find it difficult to leave their house, open or read their mail, or respond to phone calls. A sanction can leave single claimants with no money at all for weeks, or even months.” (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Hunger and Food Poverty, 2014: 34, 39).
The report was released at a press conference led by Archbishop Justin Welby, head of the Church of England, which had sponsored the inquiry. The Archbishop also published an op-ed in the *Mail on Sunday* the day prior to the launch to call for greater action on hunger (Walters and Petre, 2014). This media-savvy launch attracted extensive coverage, including a live-blog on the webpage of *The Guardian*, much of which focused on the benefits issue. The findings led to a minor rift within the coalition government that saw Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron defend the sanctions system, while Liberal Democrat Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg called for changes (“Archbishop Justin Welby urges help for UK hungry,” 2014; Richardson, 2014; Sparrow, 2014).

However, rather than the end of the process, the launch of the food banks report served as the start of further action. The *APPG on Hunger and Food Poverty* issued follow-up reports tracking the implementation of the recommendations at three months, six months, and one year after the initial inquiry (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Hunger and Food Poverty, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c). Each document attracted considerable media attention, especially the full year review which included a foreword from Archbishop Welby in which he lamented the lack of progress and again criticized government policies for aggravating the situation:

> I am saddened to be writing this Foreword because this document demonstrates clearly that there are still many people going hungry in our country today. It is a tragedy that such a reality still exists in our country... It is shocking to read both of the scale of food waste and also of the large amount of evidence that sanctions and delays in connection with the benefits system are still causing what would appear to be unnecessary problems (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Hunger and Food Poverty, 2015a: 6).

Coverage of the report – and Welby’s critiques of the benefits system – appeared in major media outlets like *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph* (“Archbishop Justin Welby - Welfare reforms leave poor at risk of hunger,” 2015; Butler, 2015). The Group’s Co-Chair, veteran Labour MP Frank Field, also earned press with his comment that the government considered “the scandal of hunger as little more than a boil of no significance on our society” (quoted in Demianyk, 2015).

In addition to media pressure, the *APPG on Hunger and Food Poverty* also took legislative action as well. The week after the launch of its one-year review, Frank Field introduced a 10-minute rule bill that would require local authorities in England and Wales to automatically register all children who are eligible for free school meal programs rather than waiting for their
parents to sign them up, a change that Field estimated could benefit up to 160,000 students per year (Field, 2015). Moreover, given that the funding available to schools is tied to the number of students on receiving free meals, the measure could help to improve the quality of education in low income areas as well. While such bills normally fail to pass first reading, Field’s initiative cleared that step, largely thanks to the record 125 other MPs who co-sponsored the bill (Waugh, 2015). While the bulk of these supporters were Labour members, they also included 27 Conservative MPs, roughly a tenth of the party’s backbenchers.

It should be stressed that the majority of APGs in the UK have collegial relationships with the government and focus primarily on engaging with stakeholders and developing non-controversial policy recommendations. However, the greater diversity of opinions within each party in the UK, combined with the greater willingness of backbench MPs to express such differences and the greater tolerance of them among party leaders, means that Westminster is home to more APGs that are willing to openly challenge the government in pursuit of their objectives. It is simply hard to imagine an APG in any of the other three jurisdictions studied either making similar criticisms of recent government policy changes, or going to such great lengths to ensure they attracted media attention. In particular, while the APPG on Hunger and Food Poverty was co-chaired by Labour MP Frank Field and the Bishop of Truro (a member of the House of Lords), the food bank inquiry panel included two first-time Conservative MPs (John Glen and Sarah Newton) as well as Baroness Jenkin of Kennington, a Conservative Peer. Such critical activity could be career ending for legislators in Canada and Ontario. Instead, Glen not only kept his position as a Parliamentary Private Secretary but was re-appointed following the 2015 election.42 It was also noteworthy that so many Conservative backbenchers would co-sponsor Field’s private member’s bill just days after he had publicly attacked the government for not caring about hunger in Britain.

This acceptance of APG activity was also evident among the party whips interviewed in the UK, although they noted the need to be respectful. As one assistant government whip stated:

From the whip’s point of view, I suppose we prefer to say that we’re very happy for the people to be critical friends. And on a very personal level I think that

42 Parliamentary Private Secretaries are unpaid junior officials within the British government. They are the fourth tier of ministers beneath Secretaries of State, Ministers of State, and Parliamentary Under-Secretaries of State.
challenge is always good, only good can amount from challenge. So we neither encourage nor discourage it. We don’t get involved in peoples’ activity in APGs… I think urging a government to do more is not a criticism, urging your own government to change direction is something you should do behind closed door and not in blaze of publicity. So it’s less about what you do and the more the way you do it (confidential interview, May 2013).

Very similar comments were made by another MP who had served as an assistant opposition whip. When asked if there were any boundaries as to how far an APG could push the government, he replied,

As far as I’m concerned – and you will get different answers probably from different channels – but the answer is no. Having said that I think there is an order of play that you should abide by in order to be courteous and polite, but also often by being courteous and polite you can go further. So I wouldn’t just, for example, if we’ve got a bee in our bonnet about something just spring it on the Minister on the floor of the House. I will endeavor to raise it privately, usually by letter. If I can corner one in the division lobby I will. Even if you raise it on the floor of the House, having done that there are various ways you can raise it. But the short answer to your question is, nothing is out of limits as far as I’m concerned. And I’m very happy to comment about policy and say where I think the Government is going wrong….

In my time in the Whip’s office… I never leaned heavily on people if they weren’t happy with something. It’s a representative democracy. I’ve never had in any of my conversations a conversation about an APG that was being too strident. So maybe that begs the question are the APGs being strident enough? (confidential interview, May 2013).

Yet while allowing for a broader range of APG activities, this greater diversity of views across party lines in the UK can create challenges of its own. In particular, the requirement for registered APGs to be open to parliamentarians from all parties means that members of rival groups will at times try to attend each other’s meetings. This reality can lead to awkward situations, as occurred when members of the APPG on Dying Well were asked to leave a meeting of the APPG on Choice at End of Life (confidential interview, October 2012). Someone involved with another health APG similarly recounted how it struggled to cope with a parliamentarian who opposed the group’s policy objectives but regularly attended its meetings to gather intelligence (confidential interview, November 2012). In response the group began to hold private meetings for the executive only, which were not publicized on the All-Party Whip.
The pressure to be open to all parliamentarians can also lead some APGs to remain unregistered to ensure that the group leaders maintain control of their agendas. For instance, the MPs behind the *Cross-Party Inquiry into Unplanned Pregnancy* deliberately chose to create a one-time, unregistered inquiry so they could examine the rise in unwanted pregnancies across the UK while excluding those MPs opposed to the provision of abortion services (Martinson, 2012).

## 5 Member participation and group decision making

While the formal membership structure and level of external support varies greatly across jurisdictions, a seemingly universal truth of APG activity is that many, if not most of the parliamentary “members” of each group do not actually participate in their activities. This lack of involvement appears to reflect both limitations on parliamentarians’ time, as well as the reality parliamentarians may join APGs only to gain access to the briefings they produce or to signal their support for a particular cause. As a result, group decisions tend to be made by a small number of active members, typically with substantial input and advice from their external partners. Indeed, in many cases decision making falls primarily to group chairs or to the external secretariat organizations themselves. However, the freedom afforded to group decision makers tends to reflect the broader pattern of partisan conflict in each jurisdiction.

While found in each jurisdiction, the low level of involvement by members is especially evident among the APGs at Westminster, where the requirement for 20 qualifying members artificially inflated the number of parliamentarians who joined many groups. It would be highly unrealistic to expect all 20 of the qualifying members required for each group to be active. At the time of my British fieldwork in 2012, the 584 active APGs required 11,680 qualifying members to be listed on the registry. The even distribution of these positions across all members of the Commons and the Lords would result in more than eight qualifying memberships each, though in reality the burden faced by backbenchers would actually be much higher given the large number of inactive peers and the exclusion of most front bench MPs from APG activity. As a result, there is little prospect that the average parliamentarian could actually be active in the groups to which they belong.

Reflecting this situation, several British respondents said that they had agreed to be a qualifying member as a favour to a fellow parliamentarian who was trying to establish a new group. As one MP said, “[an MP] needs a number of signatures from each side, but frankly if the member of
parliament has so few friends that he can’t persuade the requisite number to sign up, they must have a very sad life” (confidential interview, November 2012). Another respondent also reported being signed up as a qualifying member despite declining a request to join the group (confidential interview, October 2012). The Speakers’ Working Group on APGs reached similar findings, reporting that members complained of being lobbied to join one group or another or listed as a qualifying member without their knowledge (2012: 10). Recognizing its failure to limit group growth or ensure the scrutiny of their activities by parliamentarians, the qualifying member system was discontinued in the rule changes that took effect after the 2015 election.

Scottish APGs are also notorious for failing to have the two MSPs present at group meetings necessary to obtain quorum. In addition, the requirement for each APG at Holyrood to have participation from all five of the parties represented in the Parliamentary Bureau creates an unrealistic burden on the smaller parties, especially the Liberal Democrats and the Greens/Independents, which each have just five MSPs to cover the Parliament’s 88 APGs. Even the 15 Conservative MSPs must still each belong to six groups on average to ensure all-party representation. Given these limitations, the parliamentarians interviewed reported that members of the smaller parties will often agree to support the formation of an APG but have little intention of being actively involved.

At the beginning of this parliamentary term a lot of the Tories weren’t really that keen in joining so we had to twist a few arms and say you don’t have to come along and meet these people but at least put your name down because otherwise you can’t even form a group. And you don’t want the Tories to be seen not supporting the CPG [on a given issue]…

I can assure you there’s nobody wrestling to be a Convener in these groups. A lot of people are quite keen for somebody else to do it because it could be quite an onerous task especially if you’re in the woods. When I got elected I said I wasn’t going to join any CPG, and then in a couple of months I was on about a dozen. I had only been to two or three (MSP, December 2012).

The level of engagement among APG members in Canada varies greatly between groups. The officially recognized intercountry groups in the Canadian Parliament tend to have large memberships, but many parliamentarians only join to be eligible for potential travel or to vote for the group’s executive (Parliamentary Centre, 2003). The role that possible travel plays in group membership can be clearly seen by comparing the five bilateral country groups that receive full travel support from the Parliament to the four that receive only administrative support: as of
2012, the former had an average membership of 153, as compared to just 82 for the latter. The level of member engagement is somewhat better in those Canadian subject groups like the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity, Outdoors Caucus, and Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care that fund their operations using contributions from the office budgets of their members. However, many others have no formal members beyond their executives, by definition eliminating the role of members.

The result of this limited engagement by members is that group decisions in each jurisdiction are typically managed solely by the group’s officers – or even just the group chair – with support from the external partners. As described more thoroughly in Chapter Three, this dynamic is partially identified by Ringe et al. (2013) in their study of the APGs at the US Congress and European Parliament. They argue that each APG has a “leadership network” that conducts group affairs, enabling the majority of members to free-ride on the APG’s activities. The relationships formed between the legislators in this network, and between those in the network and the external sponsors, are also seen to give rank-and-file group members confidence that the information shared by the group is both objective and non-partisan.

However, this account by Ringe et al. appears to present a highly idealized version of APG operations. Instead, APGs in the jurisdictions examined seldom had either a true “network” of leaders or a substantial degree of autonomy from their external partners. While perhaps indicating a greater commitment to an issue beyond that of the general members, many APG officers are not active in the groups to which they belong. Instead, the parliamentarians, journalists, and lobbyists interviewed in Canada, Scotland, and the UK all stressed that most groups are driven primarily by their chairs, with limited engagement from most other officers. Reflecting these observations, when I contacted one British MP in October 2012 to arrange an interview, her assistant informed me that she would have little to say since “She was only the secretary” of the group. Likewise, some Canadian groups reported have difficulty recruiting MPs from each party to sit on their executive, and so were forced to rely on parliamentarians who agreed to lend their names to establishing the groups, but did not take active role in their affairs.

Having such inactive executive members associated with a particular APG may give the group credibility in the eyes of other legislators, and such officers would likely withdraw their
participation should those actually operating the group take any actions that were highly objectionable. However, this kind of latent veto over group activities is very different than the situation described by Ringe et al. (2013), who stressed the trust that rank-and-file group members placed in the information provided by each APG flowed from the “strong ties” between those in the leadership network. Such ties are said to “reflect close and frequent social contacts, such as those between friends or between close and trusted colleagues” (Ringe et al., 2013: 45). Yet the relationships between the executive members in many APGs would fall well short of that level of interaction. Instead, they generally resemble what Ringe et al. refer to as “weak ties,” which are “more casual social contacts, linking acquaintances whose connections are more tenuous and context dependent” (2013: 45). The absence of strong ties is particularly likely for those groups whose executive members were recruited by outside stakeholders.

Moreover, rather than ensuring the quality of the information provided by the external partners, many APG leaders are largely dependent on the resources that these actors provide. Several of the parliamentarians interviewed took pains to describe how they were in control of their groups they chaired and did not just abide by the wishes of outside partners or lobbyists. One British MP was particularly unequivocal on the issue, stating that “I set the terms of what the inquiries will be… I mean I’m a pretty robust member Parliament. I decide what we investigate, and nobody else does. Now people might have a view – I get written to all the time by organizations saying, ‘Will you investigate this?’ We haven’t got time to do it” (confidential interview, November 2012). However, most others were more nuanced, insisting that they made the decisions about group activities, but did so based on the options presented from the external stakeholders. As a Canadian MP stated:

So yes, [the co-chair] and I are the ones that make the decisions because we're the chairs, but we're basing it off of what we're hearing from the stakeholders and what we're hearing from the other MPs. We're not doing it just based off of "hey this is what I want to hear about," we're basing it off of what we think the MPs are wanting and what stakeholders are recommending to us (confidential interview, December 2013).

Likewise, another British MP involved with one of the former associate parliamentary groups stressed that the influence of external groups was not tied to the membership fees they paid: “So [a major corporation] doesn’t buy more influence than a small… company, and neither do they
have any influence on the election the parliamentary officers and the governance of the body. Advice yes, but rights, no” (confidential interview, November 2012).

By contrast, several of the external lobbyists from each jurisdiction, including Ontario, openly discussed their influence on APG activities, describing how they sought to use APGs to advance their broader policy goals. The public affairs manager for a British charity was quite upfront on this point:

But we use the APPG a lot. So in all of our policy work, all of our public affairs work, all of our campaigning work we would think how can the APPG be useful here, how can the APPG help here, how can we engage the APPG on this how can we get them interested in this? Really, for us, those members are people who have put their hand up and said, ‘Well we care about [the issue].’ So that’s the best audience for us in terms of mobilizing support in Parliament and educating them about what’s happening with [the subject] (confidential interview, November 2012).

A surprisingly similar sentiment also came from one of the secretariat providers in Ontario, who when asked what proportion of her time was devoted to group activities, replied that “It’s hard to separate from the rest of my work because I use it as a tool” (confidential interview, May 2014).

Ultimately, when group executives choose different topics to examine or initiatives to pursue, they often do so from options or potential issues presented by their secretariat providers. Indeed, even when the parliamentary members independently choose which issues they will address, they still regularly rely on the secretariat partners to suggest potential speakers or presenters for group meetings. This function gives APGs a powerful role in filtering the information received by parliamentarians.

This is not to say that the external actors that support APGs can abuse their positions to force parliamentarians to pursue a course of action despite their objections. As the conflicts described above make clear, parliamentarians will push back against stakeholders that are overly assertive or seek to take an APG in a direction that runs counter to their political instincts. Most external sponsors and APG organizers also accept that they should not determine each and every group activity. Instead, they generally seek to combine their own agendas with the wishes of members. As an administrator at one of the independent secretariat organizations put it, it’s a balancing act for us between our own ideas as policy wonks and parliamentarians’ ideas about what they want – which might be to do with their
constituencies or whatever – with our industry members who are funding it, making sure we know what their concerns are so that it all feeds in together. It’s a matter of stakeholder management (confidential interview, May 2013).

Such balancing is important if groups are to remain credible. In fact, one advocacy officer with a Canadian charity expressed pride that the APG supported by her organization had undertaken an independent event without her support, which indicated a greater commitment among its leaders (confidential interview, November 2013). Yet even while accommodating and recognizing the independence and wishes of the parliamentary officers, there is still considerable room for external stakeholders to use the APGs as vehicles for advancing their core objectives. As discussed in Chapter Eight, charities and NGOs are generally much more willing to use APGs as tools for advancing their government relations priorities. By contrast, the greater public and media scrutiny of interactions between corporations and politicians generally leads them to be less assertive.

However, within this general pattern there are certainly variations. In many groups the broader executive and even general members are involved in decision making and carrying out group activities. In particular, member involvement also can increase when groups are conducting inquiries and so hold more frequent meetings to receive evidence, or when APGs are actively conducting policy advocacy, and so need to coordinate strategy and voting among their members. Indeed the greater frequency of interaction required for such inquiries or advocacy can actually lead to the formation of strong ties between group members. Yet unlike the situation described by Ringe et al. (2013), such ties emerge as a result of APG activity, and are not a precondition that enables it.

Some chairs are also more independent from the secretariat providers than others. This is particularly true of those APG chairs who have a background in the policy issue, or have a clear objective in mind. The coordinator of a Scottish APG illustrated this reality with a description of how group decision making changed following the arrival of new leaders:

So when I started working with the group, we had two very active… dynamic conveners. Very interested, very sure what they wanted to do. And at that point they would come to me with, ‘I was speaking to this person last week, and I think we should do an issue on this.’ Or, ‘This is coming up in the chamber and I want us to do a meeting on that topic or whatever.’ And so they were probably suggesting around two-thirds of topics [for meetings]. And sometimes you know, I would explain why that might not be quite workable or throw in some other
ideas, but they drove the agenda a lot and were very – they had a clear sense of what they wanted of the group, and I was there to facilitate that… After the election… we got two new conveners… So they are both very passionate and very committed, but just as individuals neither of them is particularly dynamic in the same way. And so I now, I now suggest far more of the agenda, and check it with them, but it definitely comes much more from me than it did previously (confidential interview, November 2012).

Further variations can also be found between jurisdictions in keeping with the partisan tensions described above. As could be expected from the discussion of intra-APG conflict, the decision-making procedures employed and extent of autonomy afforded to group leaders tend to mirror the broader state of partisan conflict within each jurisdiction and on the policy issues addressed by the groups: the greater the tensions between the parties, the more likely an APG is to require unanimity or consensus when making major decisions. However, this is not to say that each executive member is equally involved in group decision making or planning. Rather, the active officers and external partners who are the main drivers of each group often take care to secure the approval of the representatives from each party before going forward. Such approval grows increasingly important as the action in question becomes more public and more confrontational vis-à-vis the government. For instance, one Canadian parliamentarian described delaying a public statement by an APG until an issue was somewhat removed from the public eye, and hence would be less embarrassing for the government (confidential interview, May 2012). Some Canadian parliamentarians also will check with their respective parties before agreeing to certain actions, restricting the autonomy of APGs. Such tensions can lead groups to limit the scope of their operations out of the knowledge that cross-party approval would be difficult to obtain.

The inclusive format of Scottish APGs also increases the pressure on group leaders to ensure that any actions taken are supported not only by the parliamentary members, but by the external members as well. The outside members do not typically vote on group activities, but group leaders are sensitive of the need to avoid actions that the members would oppose. Those external actors that serve as the secretariats for Scottish APGs also recognize to the need to maintain support from the other outside members by serving as honest brokers. One described seeking out topics unrelated to the organization’s own mandate in order to demonstrate inclusivity:

We’ve had various meetings on things that would be totally out with [our] agenda, and I think it’s important that that happens. If you don’t do that, you are only setting yourself up for difficulties… So I think it benefits me if I am fair about it and if I’m not partisan about it. But it does mean that sometimes we are
organizing a meeting… which is kind of outside—you know, it doesn’t benefit the organization specifically (confidential interview, November 2012).

By comparison, many British APGs were much less concerned about securing all-party buy-in for group actions, with government members willing to join in criticisms of their own parties.

6 Conclusion

The majority of the APGs in Canada, Ontario, Scotland, and the UK function in a very similar fashion on a day-to-day basis, with a small number of parliamentarians making decisions on group activities, typically with extensive support from the external actors who provide group secretariats. This reality underscores the importance of distinguishing the factors shaping APG participation by rank-and-file group members versus those who hold leadership positions. Indeed, there are often just one or two officers in each group who perform much of the work needed to keep each group going. APG participation is more costly for these leaders in terms of their time and office resources, but in return they also have a much greater ability to shape group activities in line with their own objectives. The competition for leadership positions in some cases indicates the belief among at least some parliamentarians that leading an APG can bring personal prestige or other advantages. These motivations for member participation in APGs are explored further in the Chapter Seven.

This finding that only a small number of parliamentarians are actively engaged in the management of each group undermines Ringe et al.’s (2013) argument that it is strong ties between group leaders that give other parliamentarians confidence in the information transmitted via APGs. Instead the relationship between groups leaders seldom meet the threshold for “strong ties,” and if it does, the strength of the tie is frequently a product of participation in APG activities rather than a prior condition.

Despite these similarities in their daily operations, the formal structures and range of activities of undertaken by APGs do vary between jurisdictions in a fashion that reflects the broader tensions between the parties and tolerance for backbench dissent in the different political systems. In the UK, where backbench revolts are relatively common, APGs require only a basic level of cross-party support between the government and opposition to officially register. They also have the greatest freedom of action, with Westminster being home to proportionally more groups that are willing to openly critique government policy. Conversely, APGs in the other three jurisdictions
each require – either through formal rules or informal norms – at least some measure of participation from the minor parties in order to operate. They also tend to be much less likely to publicly challenge the government, with many groups choosing to deliberately limit the range of activities they pursue in order to maintain support from governing party members who fear being seen to oppose their own parties. In Canada, these partisan tensions often result in various policy issues being addressed through intra-party caucuses rather than across party-lines in APGs.

Such differences in group structure and behaviour between jurisdictions also help to demonstrate the modularity of APGs as a tool for legislative mobilization and engagement with stakeholders. The basic APG structure has been equally well adapted for use both by activist groups that campaign for policy change as well as those that limit themselves to information sharing. APGs have also been made to work with a wide range of membership and leadership structures, including those groups that restrict membership solely to parliamentarians and those that include external stakeholders as equal members with legislators. However, these adaptations do shape the potential axes of conflict within each group, as can be seen in the tensions that emerged between the parliamentary and external members in several Scottish APGs.

The discussion of group operations and decision making also shines a light on the important role of external actors in underwriting and enabling APG activity. Unfortunately, fully reliably information on the level of support received from external stakeholders is not available for any of the four cases. This is particularly true for inter-country groups, which often enjoy ties to diplomatic activities and foreign travel that do not appear on declarations of group support. Nonetheless, the availability of support from external actors is crucial to any explanation of APG growth in recent years, as is a consideration of the benefits that external actors receive from their engagement with APGs. This issue is explored more thoroughly in Chapter Eight, but it should already be evident that supporting APG operations gives external actors considerable input into their affairs, and hence the potential to influence what information parliamentarians receive via APGs and what activities the groups undertake. The next chapter also considers pressure from external actors as one of factors driving the emergence of new APGs.
CHAPTER 6

APG CREATION, DISSOLUTION, AND PATTERNS OF INTERACTION

1 Introduction

While several researchers have sought to account for APG growth in recent decades, the theories they developed often focus primarily on the role that APGs play within each legislature and the reasons that members participate in their activities, with no consideration of the factors that actually prompt APG creation or their institutional life-cycle (e.g. Ringe et al., 2013; Victor and Ringe, 2009). This oversight is unfortunate since the role played by APGs at a given point in time may not reflect the original reasons that they were created. For instance, an APG may originally have been established to campaign for policy change, but then switched to information sharing after realizing that cross-party consensus would be difficult to achieve. Examining APG operations only after they are up and running also removes any consideration of which circumstances may have catalysed their initial formation, and which actors were the primary movers in the process. The institutional life-cycle of APGs is also an important consideration in conceptualizing the role that the groups play within a legislature. If the majority of APGs tend to form and dissolve quickly then they are unlikely to have the same policy impact as those that endure over the longer term.

Research from the US Congress has found multiple factors that can contribute to the formation of a new APG (Hammond, 1998). These include internal institutional factors, such as the failure of existing formal institutions to respond to a policy issue; shorter-term external developments like a crisis in a particular industry; longer-term external developments like the emergence of new policy fields (e.g. climate change, information technology); or pressure from external actors. Demonstration effects may also play a significant role, with new the formation of new APGs often being inspired by the success of existing groups on a related subject.

The forces driving group formation in Canada, Ontario, Scotland, and the UK are explored further below. While several of the factors identified in the American literature were certainly
observed, others were encountered as well. In particular, instances were found in which the establishment a new APG resulted from the emergence of a new politically relevant social group, or from the arrival of new parliamentarians with distinct demographic characteristics. In a variant of demonstration effects, several APGs were also found that were local chapters of broader international networks. It should also be noted that APG creation is seldom the result of a single factor, but rather the combination of several. For instance, after being inspired by the efforts of existing APGs, external actors may ask parliamentarians to create new APGs on recently emerged policy issues that are not being sufficiently addressed by existing legislative institutions. They may then approach newly arrived parliamentarians with backgrounds in the relevant issues to chair the groups.

Yet while there are typically multiple factors at play in the establishment of a new group, demonstration effects appear to play the largest role in the recent surge in group creation across jurisdiction. This reality is evident in the clusters of APGs that are found in different policy sectors, as well as in the number of parliamentarians that serve as “APG entrepreneurs,” creating multiple groups, at times in different subject areas. This trend can lead to a large overlap in the issues considered by different APGs, and so the chapter explores the patterns of interaction between such groups to shed further light on the factors driving group creation. While some groups in the same sector cooperate, others may compete – either because they take opposite sides of the same policy issue, or because their external partners have conflicting goals.

Before exploring the factors driving group creation, the chapter first examines the patterns of group creation and dissolution in each jurisdiction to provide the context for the analysis. The results indicate that roughly 10 to 30 percent of the APGs active in a given parliamentary session will not reform following the next election. This finding indicates that while the overall population of APGs is largely stable, there is also considerable turnover. As such, the factors that lead to APG dissolution are explored at the end of the chapter to see if they can shed further light on the reasons for the overall increase in APG growth. This exploration reveals that the forces causing group demise are often the mirror image of those that prompt group creation, such as the resolution of a policy issue. However, APG dissolution is also frequently sparked by the departure of group chairs, a trend that further underscores the fact that many groups are driven by just a small number of members.
2 Trends in APG creation and dissolution

The number of APGs in operation – or appearing to be in operation – fluctuates with the legislative cycle. There is a drop after each election as some groups are not restarted and others take time to re-register. As a result, the number of active APGs in each jurisdiction is typically highest immediately prior to an election as the continuing groups have been re-established and new groups have been created. This trend appears to be constant across all of the cases, as well as the US Congress and the European Parliament. However, it should also be noted that some groups may form and die out between elections.

To clarify how these dynamics of group creation and demise play out over time, Tables 6.1 to 6.3 track the growth of APGs in the UK, Scotland, and Canada respectively, showing how many groups were formed in each session of parliament, how many continued to the next session, and how many disbanded. In constructing these tables the officers, secretariat organizations, and mandates of each group were examined to distinguish instances of merger or rebranding from those of group demise. For the UK and Scotland, the data are based on one register from each parliamentary session. Where possible, the last register prior to the next general election was used. The lack of an APG registry in Canada means that the figures are based which APGs were found to be active at any point during each session of parliament. As such, it is possible that others may have exited as well, or that some of those counted may have dissolved prior to the next election.

Looking at Table 6.1, while the figures for the total number of groups in registered would suggest APG growth in Britain stalled after the 2010 election, the broader data indicate that group creation was down only marginally. Instead, the decline came from a surge in the number of APGs that failed to reform after the vote. A similar spike in group demise (at least in proportionate terms) also occurred following the 1997 election, suggesting that the large turnovers of MPs associated with a change in government could increase APG mortality. Should this trend continue, the relatively low turnover of MPs at the 2015 British election may result in higher proportion of groups reforming after the vote, which could in turn push APG numbers to new all-time highs if the rate of group formation remains constant.

In terms of the groups themselves, there were 917 separate APGs listed across the five British registries examined. Of these, 143 APGs appeared on all five registries, producing a 59 percent
survival rate for 242 groups on the initial 1996 registry. This rate was fairly constant for both inter-country and subject groups (64 percent vs 56). Of the 127 new APGs founded during the 1997-2001 parliament, 67 were continuously active in all subsequent registries, a survival rate of 53 percent.

Table 6.1 – APG creation and demise at the British Parliament, 1996 – 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Registry</th>
<th>Total on registry</th>
<th>Continuing from previous registry</th>
<th>New groups created</th>
<th>Not continuing to next registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>53 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>43 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>52 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>594</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>165 (28%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given its recent creation, the Scottish Parliament offers a unique opportunity to examine the development of an APG eco-system. In contrast to the UK, neither the defeat of the Labour-Liberal Democrat coalition in 2007 nor the SNP majority victory in 2011 produced a surge in APG demise. Rather, the number of groups not continuing to the next session actually declined in proportionate terms despite the changes in government. In fact, Scotland stands out for the fact that the rates of both group creation and demise have remained nearly constant in absolute terms over the past three sessions. This stability may be a byproduct of the Parliament’s approval process for new APGs, which to some extent forces those advocating for the creation of a new group to think critically about how it will interact with the existing groups, and which constituencies it will mobilize. All told, there were 127 different APGs found across the four registries. Of the 49 APGs established in the Parliament’s first session, 31 remained in operation in 2015, yielding a 63 percent survival rate.

Table 6.2 – APG creation and demise at the Scottish Parliament, 2003 – 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Registry</th>
<th>Total on registry</th>
<th>Continuing from previous registry</th>
<th>New groups created</th>
<th>Not continuing to next registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>13 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13 (21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lastly, Table 6.3 presents the number of APGs found to be active in the past five sessions of the Canadian Parliament. The data show a large spike in the number of new groups created in the 2011-2015 Parliament, a reality that may reflect the increased stability produced by the Conservative parliamentary majority during that period. The Canadian case is also notable for the proportionately low numbers of APGs that fail to reform after each election – a reality that is particularly surprising given the substantial turnover of MPs during this period. Overall, this low group mortality meant that 42 of the 59 APGs active in 2001-2004 were in continuous operation throughout the period studied, yielding an impressive 71 percent survival rate. However, it is unlikely that this high survival rate will continue given the massive number of new MPs voted in during the 2015 election (197 out of 338). A total of 137 different APGs operated at the Canadian Parliament during the sessions examined.

Table 6.3 – APG creation and demise at the Canadian Parliament, 2001 – 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parliament</th>
<th>Active in Parliament</th>
<th>Continuing from last Parliament</th>
<th>New groups created</th>
<th>Not active in next Parliament</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001-2004</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2006</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2008</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2011</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2015</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although APGs are informal bodies, the image presented above is one of relative stability, with a clear majority of groups not only continuing on from one session of Parliament to the next, but over several sessions. This relatively high level of continuity suggests that most APGs survive the changes in membership and leadership that occur over time, and in turn that APGs can provide consistent points of contact and engagement for external interests. More importantly, the endurance of so many APGs over several parliamentary sessions indicates that both parliamentarians and the external stakeholders who support them must see value in ensuring their continued operation.
3 Group formation

Writing on the American case, Hammond (1998) argues that groups often form due to a sense that parties or congressional committees are not sufficiently responding to issues. In particular, she found that nearly two-thirds of the caucuses established following 1984 dealt with issues that fell under the jurisdiction of three or more committees. In such cases, creating APGs allows politicians to focus on specific issues in a way that is not possible through existing mechanisms.

American APGs may also form in response to external events or changes in the political context. These situations can include short-term political developments, such as a crisis in a particular industry; societal changes, such as the development of the women’s rights movement; or the emergence of new policy issues, such as environmental protection. Furthermore, demonstration effects can play a major role, with Hammond writing that “Caucuses are also started because other caucuses are successful… Members considered early industry caucuses as successful models of congressional response to constituent concerns and copied them for new industry problems” (1998: 49). Reflecting these insights, demonstration effects are often particularly evident in specific policy sectors, with clusters of groups in the same general field tending to be formed around the same time. New APGs may also be created to specifically to oppose the actions of established APGs that have been successful in pursuing their own agendas.

While also acknowledged by Hammond, research from the UK focuses much more on the role of external partners in sparking APG creation. 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” (1985: 178). However, these external efforts to create British APGs is not limited to private corporations, with many charities and not-for-profit groups working to establish APGs as well (Jordan and Richardson, 1987). Indeed, the UK’s various scientific associations were heavily involved in creating the Parliament’s first APG, the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee in the 1930s (Walkland, 1964).

3.1 Emergence of new issues

In keeping with Hammond’s (1998) congressional findings, the sudden emergence (or re-emergence) of new policy issues is a major driver of APG creation in Westminster jurisdictions.
as well. A clear example of this phenomenon in the Canadian context was when the *All-Party Sugar Caucus* was founded in 1994 to combat new American tariffs on Canadian sugar exports (Canadian Sugar Institute, 2012). The 2006 creation of the *All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity* was also in part driven by the emergence of the conflict and genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan. Similarly, the British Parliament saw the founding of the *APPG on Extraordinary Rendition* in 2005 and the *APPG on Drones* in 2012 as those issues emerged as matters of public concern.

APGs also frequently form in advance of a government decision on a given policy issue. The *APPG on the Third London Airport* emerged in the 1970s to oppose one of the potential airport sites being considered by the government (Richardson and Kimber, 1971). More recently, the *APPG on High Speed Rail* formed to support the development of the “High Speed Two” project that would connect London and Birmingham and other UK cities by high speed rail. In 2005, MSPs established a similar group, the *CPG on Glasgow Crossrail*, with the stated purpose “To press the case with the Scottish Executive for the creation of a crossrail scheme for Glasgow and to highlight the benefits that such a scheme would bring to Glasgow and the West of Scotland” (Scotland. Parliament, 2005). In the same vein, MPs in Canada launched the *All-Party Shipbuilding Caucus* after the federal government began to explore options for the construction of the country’s next generation of naval, coast guard, and arctic patrol vessels (confidential interview, December 2013). The group was composed primarily of MPs representing constituencies with shipyards and lobbied for the development of a domestic national shipbuilding program.

Largely the same dynamics can be found among those UK groups that are formed to help parliamentarians mobilize around certain major events or to respond to particular crises that affect citizens in multiple constituencies, such as the *APPGs* for the *London Olympics* and for the *Arch Cru Investment Scheme*. Overall, the formation of APGs in response to new policy issues suggests that such groups provide an effective way to bring parliamentarians and external stakeholders together to define policy problems, develop solutions, and/or lobby for their adoption. In doing so they also perform a symbolic function by demonstrating that parliamentarians are seized with pressing policy issues, such as climate change.
As well as creating new APGs, the emergence of new issues can also breathe new life into APGs that had become dormant. The Canadian All-Party Women’s Caucus met only infrequently during the first few years of the 41st Parliament (2011 to 2015) (Ryckewaert, 2014). However, it became more active after allegations of sexual harassment emerged against two Liberal MPs in November 2014. Caucus members met with the Speaker of the House to discuss how to create a new system for dealing with such complaints and also arranged a forum with a professor who researched the problem of workplace harassment (Aiello, 2014; Ryckewaert, 2015).

The creation of new inter-country APGs can also reflect the growing importance of a given country or region. As discussed in Chapter 2, the fastest growing category of inter-country APGs in Canada, Scotland, and the UK over the past two decades were those partnering with countries in the Asia-Pacific region, a trend that reflects the region’s increasing importance to the global economy, questions of international security, and its rise as a source of immigrants. The growing power of countries in the Middle East is similarly evident in the establishment of British APPGs for Qatar and the United Emirates, as well as the Canada-Dubai Parliamentary Association. In these cases, parliamentarians appear to have a clear belief that parliamentary contacts through APGs can lead to closer diplomatic and economic relations. For instance, a Canadian Senate Committee report on how to respond to the rising economic importance of China, India and Russia recommended that “in light of the linkages established by members of the Canadian Parliament with members of the legislatures of China, India and Russia, especially by way of the activities of various multilateral and bilateral parliamentary associations… parliamentary delegations should continue to play a strong role in Canada’s diplomacy with these countries” (Canada, Senate. Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 2010). The committee also recommended that the unrecognized APGs for India and Russia should join the Canada-China Interparliamentary Association as fully recognized groups.

### 3.2 Emergence of new social groups

In addition to changes in the policy context, APGs can also form in response to the emergence of new social groups, or a growth in mobilization among those that had previously not been engaged with the political system. The link between APG creation and the emergence of social groups is most evident among those that focus on particular ethnic or religious communities. Such APGs place a strong emphasis on symbolic representation, and are typically named for the
community itself, such as the APPGs for British Hindus, British Sikhs, or the Irish in Britain, rather than a particular policy question. However, the growth of diaspora communities can also lead to the emergence of inter-country APGs as well. Two clear examples are the Canada-Ukraine and Canada-Philippines parliamentary friendship groups. Neither country has a strong trade relationship with Canada, yet both have substantial diaspora communities that seek recognition, and that Canadian politicians are keen to engage with.

The creation of APGs for new social groups appears to be strongly linked to the role of demonstration effects described further below. Once an APG has been formed for a particular ethnic or religious group, politicians and community leaders are often inspired to establish further APGs. This is particularly true for related or rival communities, such as the proliferation of APGs for different religious communities at Westminster in recent years.

3.3 Arrival of new parliamentarians

Just as changes in the external political context can drive the establishment of new groups, the formation of APGs may also occur when parliamentarians with different backgrounds arrive at parliament. This is particularly true for parliamentarians from minority communities who wish to express their cultural background and have it recognized by their colleagues within the legislature. Canadian examples include the founding of the Canada-India Parliamentary Friendship Group by Indian-born MP Canada-India Gurmant Grewal, the Canada-Romania and Canada-Moldova Friendship Groups by Romanian born MP Corneliu Chisu, and the Canada-Tamil Friendship Group by Tamil-Canadian MP Rathika Sitsabaiesan. Similarly in Scotland, MSP Hanzala Malika, who is of Pakistani heritage, drove the creation of the CPG on the Middle-East and South Asia. Generally speaking, as parliaments grow more diverse, the diversity of APGs would appear to increase as well.

New parliamentarians may also seek to create new APGs related to their past professional experience or personal interests as well. In Canada, Senator Romeo Dallaire, who commanded UN troops during the Rwandan Genocide, was the main proponent of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity. Likewise, Canadian MP Ryan Leef, who in his spare time was an amateur mixed-martial arts fighter, founded the Mixed-Martial Arts Caucus to promote the sport as a way to assist at risk youth, and also to change the legal framework that restricted the holding of professional MMA
fights in the country (Andrews, 2012; Thompson, 2011). Many of those who establish APGs on health conditions are also motivated by personal or family experience with specific illnesses.

3.4 Failure of existing institutions

APGs may also be established if there is a sense that particular issues are not being adequately managed or addressed within the existing institutional structure (Hammond, 1998). This is particularly the case for issues that cut across the jurisdictions of multiple government departments or parliamentary committees, or that are too focused or specialized to attract sustained institutional attention.

A case in point from Canada is the Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care, which emerged when a group of MPs became concerned that Parliament was not sufficiently addressing the shortage of palliative care and suicide prevention services, with the result that suicide rates and demand for assisted suicide were both rising. They formed the Committee to conduct a detailed study on the issues in a way that they felt would not possible for the House of Common’s Standing Committee on Health, which had a full agenda and would likely not focus on such a specific topic. “We did absolutely explore that,” recalled one MP. “It was too much for the Health Committee to take on. I mean this thing took over a year, I believe – maybe a year and a half. It took resources, which of course the Health Committee would have, but I think it was just too intensive and extensive a study for one committee to take on (confidential interview, November 2013). Remarkably, the UK’s APPG on Suicide and Self Harm Prevention was similarly formed in part because the Health Select Committee was unlikely to address the topic. As one member described, “select committees are so departmental focused they can’t then do the filtering down into the niche issues, so the chances of the health committee doing anything relation to suicide, unless there was a sudden suicide epidemic across the UK, are very, very small. So they’re never going to be able to focus it down, which is why somebody else has to do it” (confidential interview, October 2012). Moreover, the work of the APPG on Suicide Prevention has gone well beyond health to deal with transportation (e.g. rail safety), home affairs (e.g. police interventions with suicidal persons), and education.

This inability for parliamentary health committees to spend much time examining specific conditions may help to explain the rise of health-focused APGs in the UK, Scotland, and to a lesser extent Canada. In particular, there is a large number of well-organized and well-funded
health charities, patient advocacy groups, and pharmaceutical companies who wish to have their views heard about various individual conditions, and, in some cases, sub-conditions, such as breast cancer. APGs provide a vehicle for these voices to engage with the political system without overwhelming the formal health committees, which typically focus more on the administration of health departments. However, much the same could be said for any other policy field where many stakeholder groups compete for the attention of a single parliamentary committee. Indeed, one of those involved with APPG on Antisemitism captured its relationship with select committees in exactly the same way as the health APGs above:

So the select committees mirror government departments. And whilst they have the freedom to do ad-hoc inquiries and what have you, their focus is mainly on the government’s legislative program, scrutinizing it appropriately. I think that it probably wouldn’t have got through as an exclusively anti-Semitism focus, almost certainly. They had one on terrorism and community relations in 2004… I think the Home Affairs Select Committee did. And that touched on anti-Semitism, but I think they are looking more broadly – you know they can’t consider everything. I think it would be seen as singling one group out when they had a responsibility to do with all groups. And so it was a vacuum or niche that the All-Party Group could effectively address. So select committees I just think it would be too specific for them. Had there being a 10 fold rise in anti-Semitism one year you might’ve found that a committee would pick this up. Because there were a few incidents of racism in football, and the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee did a report on racism and football. So you might’ve had something like that. But you wouldn’t have got such a thorough, well run inquiry (confidential interview, November 2012).

In addition to overcoming instances where the formal parliamentary system is unable to deal with a given subject, APGs can also serve to create new institutions when none existed before. Such as case can be found in the Trent Severn Caucus, which brings together parliamentarians from both the Canadian Parliament and the Ontario Legislature. As its name implies, the caucus focuses on the management of the Trent Severn Waterway, a historical canal system that connects Lake Ontario with Lake Huron via the Trent River and Lake Simcoe. While the canal locks are federally managed, the operation of the system is affected by a raft of provincial legislation and policies pertaining to water quality and conservation (Panel on the Future of the Trent-Severn Waterway, 2008). This jurisdictional gap was highlighted in a report on the waterway, prompting the four federal MPs and four members of the Ontario Legislature whose constituencies are located along the waterway to establish the caucus in order to encourage greater cooperation (Devolin, 2008). Indeed, given that the federal ridings were all held by
Conservative MPs, the cross-party nature of the caucus came solely from the provincial Liberal MPPs who took part. This was also the only joint federal-provincial caucus found in this research.

Similar innovations to deal with instances of institutional failure can also be seen in the inter-country APGs at the Scottish Parliament as well. These groups help both MSPs and the Scottish government to engage more broadly in international affairs despite Scotland’s lack of international standing. In the same way, the various groups for British Overseas Territories help parliamentarians to hold the British government accountable for its actions in these jurisdictions even though they do not elect any members to the Commons. The various British APGs aimed at resolving particular short-term problems may also emerge from institutional failures, particularly when solution to the problems require action by private firms or organizations, leaving the government with no ability to impose a solution.

Several Canadian legislators also indicated a number of APGs at the Parliament had been formed since partisan political conflict had made it difficult to make progress on certain issues in the formal parliamentary forums. The All-Party Climate Change Caucus was specifically established to provide an alternative venue where the issue could be discussed without the conflict that accompanied it in the House of Commons or its committees. The group’s meetings were held under Chatham House rules, with no external participants permitted beyond invited speakers (De Souza, 2013). In addition, while the Standing Committee on Health would likely not have had the time to study the issue of palliative care, several of the MPs involved with the Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care noted that an independent inquiry was also attractive because it allowed them to remove the issue from the partisan posturing that a committee study might have produced. The All-Party Shipbuilding Caucus was also formed in hopes of removing the issue from inter-party conflict.

Finally, new APGs may also be formed because of institutional failures within existing APGs themselves. Such was the situation that led to the founding of the British All-Party Parliamentary Save the Pub Group, which was formed in part after pub owners and licensees – and the parliamentarians who supported them – began to feel that their interests were not adequately represented by the APPG on Beer. As the group’s founder and Chair, MP Greg Mulholland wrote,
I set up the All Party Parliamentary Save the Pub Group in 2009 because there was a clear and pressing need for a strong, campaigning group of pro-pub MPs to start to call for much needed change to address the wave of pub closures. The Beer Group, of which I am also happy to be a member, whilst it should and does champion and celebrate our national drink and does so well, it could not and cannot campaign for pubs and publicans - and has at times been too associated with the so called ‘industry’ rather than with pubs and publicans (Mulholland, 2015: np).

Despite initial attempts at cooperation, conflict among stakeholders in the general CPG on Disability at Holyrood similarly led to the creation of multiple groups for specific conditions. One long-serving MSP described how this proliferation occurred:

Almost within weeks of the Scottish Parliament being created, what was called the Disability Agenda started to hold events in the Parliament – to say what we are as a group of national charities who have come together to create one voice to speak on behalf of disabled people… It was decided at that point that they should pursue this CPG on Disability… Politics, and I don’t mean party politics – they started to play out in that group. While everyone thought it was a good idea, someone has to do the secretariat and one of the 7 groups who formed the Disability Agenda took on the responsibility for doing that. Unfortunately all of the other groups felt that it was that group’s agenda that was being promoted more than anybody else’s. So they are started to peel off and have their own group. So Royal National Institute for the Blind, Royal National Institute for the Deaf, and some of the other charities, Enable, the learning disability charity – all of them came together initially, they all decided that while they still liked the idea where there was collective support, that there should be a voice for disabled people, they all wanted to promote their own agendas. So we then broke down into having the Disability Group and several others (confidential interview, November 2012).

3.5 External pressure

Studies on APGs at both the US Congress and the European Parliament have repeatedly found that pressure and support from external organizations is a major driving force behind the establishment of new groups (Hammond, 1998; Ringe et al., 2013). The same is true in the four Westminster jurisdictions examined here. While some of the APGs in each of the cases were certainly initiated by parliamentarians, many were founded at least in part as a result of pressure from an outside lobby group, civil society body, or embassy. Multiple parliamentarians in all four jurisdictions spoke of being approached by outside groups looking to create an APG. Such external actors usually begin by finding a parliamentarian to champion their cause, typically
searching for one with a clear connection to the topic based on constituency characteristics or past experience professional experience.

Some lobbyists and stakeholders groups present their role in APG formation as that of assistance and facilitation. For instance, the World Wildlife Fund of Canada noted in a blog post that it had “hosted a reception on Parliament Hill in Ottawa to help launch the All Party Oceans Caucus” (Dumbrille, 2012). Similar language was used in a press release by the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC), which reported that it was hosting “a reception to officially launch the Friendship Centres All-Party Caucus” (2009: np). In reality, both organizations had done much more than their communications let on, with each recruiting the members who served on the groups’ executives before they were launched.

Other organizations, however, are not as shy about publicizing their role in the creation of new APGs. The website for Research Canada, an association of private companies and public institutions engaged in health research, notes that the organization “established a Health Research Caucus” in 2009 (2011: np). While somewhat less assertive, Canadian Federation of Independent Business marked the launch of the Entrepreneur Caucus with a press release noting that the “CFIB recommended the creation of an Entrepreneur Caucus and was pleased to receive support for the idea from Conservatives, New Democrats and Liberals” (2013: np).

In terms of inter-country groups, diplomats will often pressure parliamentarians to establish new APGs for the countries they represent. One MSP described being approached by a consular official to create an APG. Similarly, in recent interviews with the diplomatic press, representatives from the Bosnian-Herzegovinian, Romanian, and Serbian embassies all spoke candidly about working to build connections with parliamentarians prior to the launching (or relaunching) of their APGs at the Canadian Parliament (Campbell, 2012; Duggal, 2013a, 2014). Importantly, diplomats from smaller countries appear to be more inclined to engage in such lobbying relative to those that are larger or wealthier, like the economically important states in the Asia-Pacific region or the Middle-East noted above. While parliamentarians actively pursue relations with the greater international powers, smaller states appear to be more often left to pursue parliamentarians.

External organizations in the UK can also be quite upfront regarding their involvement in APG formation. A case in point is the qualifications body “EAL,” which issued a press release with
the headline “EAL initiates new All Party Parliamentary Group on Apprenticeships” to highlight its role in the group’s creation (2012: np). Likewise, in its press release marking the launch of the territory’s new APPG, the London Office for the Government of Anguilla noted that

The decision to create the APPG had been in the pipeline for a few months and plans were solidified following intense discussions between the Chief Minister and his delegation and some of the qualifying members of the group in November. The London Office has been working hard to reach out to MPs and Lords who are known to have an interest in Anguilla, or the British Overseas Territories more broadly (2014: np).

The role of external actors in creating APGs in the UK can also be seen in those groups that are specifically dedicated to – and supported by – individual outside organizations. Such groups break with the convention for APGs to officially deal with general policy issues or social groups, even when clearly sponsored and driven by particular external partners. Examples of organization-specific APGs in the UK from 1996 to 2014 include the APPGs for the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD), Channel 4, Girl Guiding UK, ITV, Lions Clubs International, Scouts, Slimming World, United Nations Women, Voice UK, and Weight Watchers. The only example found in the other jurisdictions was the Scouts Canada Parliamentary Friendship Group at the Canadian Parliament.

In addition to such instances where outside groups specifically seek the creation of an APG, parliamentarians may also suggest a new group as a way to assist the organizations they engage with. For instance, NDP MP Paul Dewar described how the inspiration to create the Canadian Arts Caucus came in a meeting with representatives from a theatre company in his constituency:

The idea of the caucus was developed at a meeting I had with Nancy Oakley, general manager at the Ottawa-based Great Canadian Theatre Company. She said artists want to reach MPs on a more regular and informal basis to help us better understand the arts sector. Together we thought of a solution which may prove much more effective than usual lobbying.

Our hope is to bridge the huge chasm between decision-makers and artists. We hope there will be a lot less ignorance among decision-makers (Dewar, 2010).

In the same way, the idea for the Eating Disorders Caucus developed after MP Mark Adler hosted an event at Parliament with an eating disorder charity based in his constituency (“MP Mark Adler to form all Party caucus on eating disorders,” 2012).
3.6 Demonstration effects and APG entrepreneurs

In many instances a major factor driving the creation of new APGs is the example provided by existing groups. This reality is particularly evident at Westminster, where large number of groups tend to be concentrated in a smaller number of policy sectors. For instance, as of September 2014, there was not a single group specifically dealing with the gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered community, yet there were 71 different registered APGs at Westminster that focused directly on health-related issues. At the apex was the All-Party Parliamentary Health Group, which looked broadly at issues affecting health and the health care system as a whole. There then was a range groups for general diseases or conditions, such as the APPGs on Cancer, Mental Health, or Obesity; groups for specific conditions, like Cystic Fibrosis, HIV/AIDS, or Parkinson’s Disease; groups for various addictions, including those on Alcohol Misuse and Smoking and Health; and finally groups on different aspects of the medical system, such as Hospice and Palliative Care, Medical Research, and Primary Care and Public Health.

The result of this proliferation was that new APGs tend to focus on ever more specific conditions. Moreover, the existence of demonstration effects is suggested by the fact that the specialized groups are typically formed after (or at least in parallel with) the more generalist groups. This trend can be seen in the areas of cancer and of heart and vascular illnesses at Westminster, with Table 6.4 presenting the six groups in each sub-sector and the parliamentary session in which they were formed.

Demonstration effects can also be found among inter-country groups, with the 2011-2015 session at the Canadian Parliament witnessing the founding or re-founding of APGs for a large number of Balkan countries, including Romania and Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2011, Moldova in 2012, Croatia and Macedonia in 2013, and Bulgaria and Serbia in 2014. None of the countries had had an active APG prior to the 2011 election, and most had never had an inter-country APG at the Canadian Parliament before. As noted in the previous section, this trend was driven by the ambassadors from the various Balkan countries and was supported by newly elected Conservative MP Corneliu Chisu, who was born in Romania.

43 Many other registered groups, such as the APPG on School Food, also had strong health implications. There were also a number of unregistered APGs on health issues, such as the Chronic Pain Policy Coalition, Diabetes in BME Communities Working Group, and the Melanoma Task Force.
Table 6.4 – British APGs focusing on cancer and heart and circulatory conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Parliamentary session established</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cancer</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breast Cancer</td>
<td>1993 – 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancer</td>
<td>1997 – 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brain Tumours</td>
<td>2005 – 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stem Cell Transplantation(^{44})</td>
<td>2005 – 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ovarian Cancer</td>
<td>2011 – 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pancreatic Cancer</td>
<td>2011 – 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heart and vascular illnesses</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardiac Risk in the Young</td>
<td>2001 – 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart Disease</td>
<td>2001 – 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stroke</td>
<td>2001 – 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thrombosis</td>
<td>2001 – 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atrial Fibrillation</td>
<td>2011 – 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vascular Disease</td>
<td>2011 – 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to domestic examples, demonstration effects are also at work internationally. Indeed, the entire system of APGs at Holyrood was inspired by the example of the groups at the British Parliament. Many of Scotland’s APGs have direct equivalents at Westminster, often with the same organizations providing secretariat services to both groups. The creation of APGs in Canada has also long been driven by the example of successful APGs in other jurisdictions. Table 6.5 shows the Canadian and Ontarian APGs whose creation was found to have been inspired by a similar group in another jurisdiction. Indeed, the first industry group to form in Ottawa, the *All-Party Steel Caucus*, was explicitly modelled after the Congressional Steel Caucus and has maintained contact with that body over time. Similarly, the leaders of the *Parliamentary Outdoors Caucus* have exchanged correspondence with their counterparts in the Congressional Sportsmen’s Caucus. Such connections can even be maintained across the Atlantic, with the Canadian *All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity* recently signing a memorandum of understanding on

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\(^{44}\) Although stem cells have other applications, the *APPG on Stem Cell Transplantation* focuses primarily on those affected by blood cancers, and is supported by the Anthony Nolan Trust, the UK’s major blood cancer charity.
cooperation with the UK’s *All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide* (The Aegis Trust, 2014). There are also several other APGs at the Canadian Parliament that are very similar to groups in other countries. These include the *Arts Caucus*, the *International Conservation Caucus*, and the *Juvenile Diabetes Caucus*, all of which have counterpart organizations at the US Congress.

Table 6.5 – APGs inspired by demonstration effects across jurisdictions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APG</th>
<th>International model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Canada</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All-Party Steel Caucus</td>
<td>Congressional Steel Caucus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Outdoors Caucus</td>
<td>Congressional Sportsmen’s Caucus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPG for the Prevention of Genocide and other Crimes Against Humanity</td>
<td>UK APPG for the Prevention of Genocide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All-Party Oceans Caucus</td>
<td>Congressional Oceans Caucus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ontario</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All-Party Cycling Caucus</td>
<td>UK APPG for Cycling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An interesting variant of these demonstration effects between countries can also be seen in those APGs that are founded as domestic chapters of international parliamentary networks. Such networks are distinct from interparliamentary bodies like the Inter-Parliamentary Union and Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, whose membership is composed of legislatures themselves. Instead, these inter-parliamentary networks are formed by individual parliamentarians in different jurisdictions who come together to address common causes. These legislators in turn tend to form local APGs to manage their involvement in such networks. APGs of this type are most visible at the Canadian Parliament, where they form a substantial portion of the subject groups in operation. Table 6.6 details these groups and the broader networks to which they belong(ed). Similar groups can also be found in the other jurisdictions examined as well. Scotland’s *CPG on Nuclear Disarmament* coordinates that legislature’s involvement in the Parliamentary Network on Nuclear Disarmament, while the *APPG on Population, Development, and Reproductive Health* serves as the local chapter of the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development.

Such inter-parliamentary networks tend to form following international conferences on particular topics. The *CPCAA* was formed following the London conference of the Inter-Parliamentary
Coalition for Combatting Antisemitism in 2009, which was attended by ten Canadian MPs (Cotler, 2009). In the same fashion, the various parliamentary groups on population and development are dedicated to implementing the Programme of Action produced at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development. Moreover, these groups often continue to host international conferences, giving parliamentarians an opportunity to meet and exchange ideas.

Table 6.6 – Canadian APGs formed as part of international networks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International network</th>
<th>Canadian Chapter</th>
<th>Years active</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentarians for Global Action</td>
<td>Canadian Parliamentarians for Global Action</td>
<td>1986 – present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament</td>
<td>Canadian Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament</td>
<td>2004 – present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-Parliamentary Coalition for Combatting Antisemitism</td>
<td>Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism</td>
<td>2009 – 2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demonstration effects can also occur when parliamentarians who are active in an existing caucus go on to establish new groups, moving the APG approach from one policy field to others that may be wholly unrelated to each other. These parliamentarians tend to function as “APG entrepreneurs,” using APGs as a modular tool to accomplish different objectives. For example, Conservative MP Jay Aspin, who was Vice-Chair of the Aerospace Caucus, went on to found the Space Caucus and the Cleantech Caucus as well. Another serial APG creator at the Canadian Parliament was NDP MP Peter Stoffer, who in addition to driving the establishment of the Canada-Netherlands Parliamentary Group was the founding Chair for the Shipbuilding and Golf caucuses. Likewise at Holyrood, Green MSP Chris Ballance actually began his speech for the approval of the CPG on a Culture of Peace in Scotland with “an on-the-record absolute promise

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45 Canadian parliamentarians continued to be active in the Inter-Parliamentary Coalition for Combatting Antisemitism beyond 2011, but the local group ceased operations and allowed its website to lapse.
that I will not attempt to start any more cross-party groups during this session of Parliament” (2005: 453). Prior to that meeting, Mr. Ballance had already received approval for the CPGs on Scottish Writing and Publishing and Tibet.

Several APG entrepreneurs can also be found at Westminster as well. MP Barry Sheerman has helped to establish close to a dozen APPGs, ranging from those on Design and Innovation and Manufacturing to those on Young People and Social Technology and Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire. As mentioned above, he founded the organization Policy Connect (formerly known as Networking for Industry) in hopes of finding a way to provide impartial secretarial services for such groups. One respondent indicated that Mr. Sheerman views himself as a “social entrepreneur” who seeks new ways to connect parliament and outside groups (confidential interview, December 2012). MP Andrew Rosindell has also been the founding chair of several APPGs, including several for various British Overseas Territories and also the group on Flags and Heraldry. In recent years a number of British APGs have also been established specifically to hold inquiries on different issues. Such groups are often inspired by other successful inquiries, with that conducted by the APPG on Antisemitism generally seen as the model to emulate.

4 Patterns of APG interaction

Many APGs deal with overlapping subjects. Such overlap can occur either result from the presence of interconnected issues, such as between the British APPGs on Climate Change and Offshore Oil and Gas, or frequently from the presence of generalist and specialist groups in the same policy field as described above. While in some cases these overlaps can result in cooperation, there is also considerable scope for conflict, particularly if two groups in the same area are supported by competing interests. However, this issue has only been marginally examined in past research. Writing on the British case, Ellis and Khan (1998) report how the creation of a Committee on Human Rights in Kashmir within the APPG on Human Rights in 1990 was shortly followed by establishment of separate APPG on Kashmir that took over the committee’s work. The two groups then undertook a coordinated series of activities to draw attention to the issue, including holding a joint one-day international conference with legislators from around the world. These initiatives were supported by the APPG on Pakistan, which had overlapping membership, and opposed by the APPG on India. Ellis and Khan conclude that these activities were effective in putting the conflict in Kashmir on the UK’s political agenda. They
also highlight how the MPs involved in the advocacy came from constituencies that had larger populations of Pakistani and Kashmiri immigrants, demonstrating the blurring of domestic and foreign policy.

As demonstrated by Ellis and Khan, the large number of APGs at Westminster makes it a particularly fertile ground for studying patterns of APG interaction. Some APGs believe that working together can increase their ability to shape government policy beyond what each could achieve separately. In reality though, such cooperation can be challenging to sustain given different characteristics and interests of each group. For instance, a history of cooperation initially existed in the area of vascular illness, with the APPGs on Diabetes, Heart Disease, Kidney, Obesity, Primary Care and Public Health, and Stroke holding a joint consultation in 2008 on the Labour government’s plan to roll out vascular risk assessments (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Diabetes et al., 2008). Then, in 2011 the new Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government announced that it would be undertaking a review of the outcomes strategies for major disease groups, including vascular disease. Once again the APPGs on Diabetes, Heart Disease, Kidney, and Stroke collaborated to produce a joint report as they had in 2008 (All-Party Parliamentary Group for Diabetes et al., 2012). The groups also invited the newly formed APPG on Vascular Disease to be a part of the coalition as well. Rather than taking part, that group went on to produce its own report (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Vascular Disease, 2012) – a choice that led to some resentment among those involved in the other groups. One respondent involved with one of the four collaborating APGs was particularly critical of the fact that the APPG on Vascular Disease was funded by medical technology companies, while those working together were supported by charities (confidential interview, November 2012).

Similar patterns of cooperation and competition can be found in other areas as well. Perhaps the most structured example of APG collaboration in any of the cases is “The APPGs on International Development,” a network created by 24 different British APPGs as well as the British chapters of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. It brings together a diverse range of both inter-country and subject groups, including the APPGs on Angola, Climate Change, Global Education for All, Human Trafficking, Street Children, and the United Nations (The APPGs on International Development, 2015). The groups seek to work together to raise issues of global poverty, but as with the health groups some tensions also exist based on the nature of their external sponsors. One respondent active with an
inter-country APG in the development network was somewhat critical of the other groups that were supported by NGOs, implying that they had their own agendas:

There is kind of a fairly clear divide, even in some the stuff that we have been doing together with a group of APPGs on international development. And all of them are good APPGs, but there still is a divide between ones that are captured by NGOs, and write NGO statements, and ones where people work in parliament for the members, and work with the NGOs to get information. And it’s largely NGOs and some pharma for the international development APPGs (confidential interview, November 2012).

In terms of inter-group competition, while the various APGs active on vascular illness issued rival reports, several much more conflictual cases were found, particularly those in which groups form on opposing sides of a controversial issue, leading to policy recommendations that not only compete with each other, but are mutually incompatible. Such arrangements are particularly common around issues of conscience. Both the British and Canadian Parliaments are home to competing groups on the issue of abortion. At Westminster, the All-Party Parliamentary Pro-Life Group dates back to the 1980s. Its main competitor is the APPG on Sexual and Reproductive Health, which was known as the All-Party Parliamentary Pro-Choice Group when first established in 2001. In addition, the 2010-2015 session of Parliament also saw the creation of the unregistered Cross-Party Inquiry into Unplanned Pregnancy, which adopted an explicitly pro-choice position.

The Canadian Parliament is similarly home to an All-Party Pro-Life Caucus, whose members attend the annual “March for Life” held at Parliament Hill. In 2012 the group mobilized in support of a private members’ motion that called for the creation of a special parliamentary committee to investigate when life begins. In response, the All-Party Women’s Caucus held a press conference calling on all MPs to vote against the motion. The pro-choice Canadian Association of Parliamentarians for Population and Development has also urged the government to reverse its decision to ban Canadian funding for international development activities from being used to support abortion services.

A parallel conflict can also be found in the UK on the issue of assisted suicide. On one side is the APPG on Choice at the end of Life, which seeks to give patients more choice over how they die, including assisted suicide. On the other is the APPG on Dying Well, which exists “To promote understanding of how good palliative care can enable terminally ill people to die peacefully and
naturally; to work with hospice care providers to support efforts to widen and improve palliative care provision; and to oppose the legislation of assisted suicide and euthanasia.” Importantly, the APPG on Dying Well is distinct from the longer running APPG on Hospice and Palliative Care, and was actually established to promote palliative care as an alternative to assisted suicide while leaving the latter as a neutral space to discuss the interests of the palliative care sector without explicitly linking the issue to the question of euthanasia (confidential interview, October 2012). However, while the Palliative Care group shared several qualifying members with the APPG on Dying Well, there was no overlap with the APPG on Choice at End of Life. As such, efforts to depoliticize the Palliative Care group do not appear to have been successful, and relations between the two sides were described as tense. One parliamentarian reported that a colleague involved in the Dying Well group had been asked to leave a meeting of the APPG on Choice at the end of Life, raising questions regarding the rule for groups to be open to all parliamentarians (confidential interview, October 2012).

Tensions can also occur between the members of different inter-country APGs as well. One instance at the Canadian Parliament came in 2009 when NDP MP Libby Davies made a members’ statement that referenced to a report by a “parliamentary delegation” to Israel and the Palestinian Territories (Davies 2009a). She also went on to criticize the Conservative government’s approach to the conflict in the Middle East. In response, James Lunney, Chair of the Canada-Israel Interparliamentary Group, raised a point of order with the Speaker arguing that the report Ms. Davies had referenced was prepared by the Canada-Palestine Parliamentary Friendship Group, which was not an officially recognized parliamentary association and so could not be referred to as a “parliamentary delegation” (Lunney 2009). As such he argued that Ms. Davies and the other parliamentarians on the trip had “misrepresented the mandate of their group and the approval of Parliament of their report and findings,” and therefore asked the Speaker “to instruct these members to strike the words ‘House of Commons/Chambre des Communes’ and ‘Parliamentary Delegation’ from the cover of their document and to clearly identify themselves as the Canada-Palestine Friendship Group as the source of this very biased report.” The Speaker took the matter under advisement, but does not appear to have ever issued a formal ruling. Significantly, the conflict over the report reflected the low number of Conservative parliamentarians involved in the Canada-Palestine Group (Adeba 2007).
5 Group dissolution

Just as there are several different circumstances that can spark APG creation, there are a number of causes for group demise as well. Indeed, in her study of the US Congress, Hammond (1998) found that oftentimes the factors leading to the dissolution of a group are the reverse of those that prompted its initial formation. For instance, groups that emerged to deal with particular policy issues may cease operations once the government has sufficiently responded to the problem. One of the clearest examples is the CPG on Borders Rail, which was established in the first session of the Scottish Parliament to lobby for the reopening of the rail line that originally ran from Edinburgh to Carlisle through the Scottish borders. The group eventually disbanded in 2006 after the Parliament adopted a bill committing to partially re-opening the line. Much the same happened with Canada’s All-Party Shipbuilding Caucus, which was formed to lobby for the adoption of a “Made-in-Canada” strategy for constructing the next generation of the country’s naval and coast guard vessels. Once the government announced the National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy, the caucus disbanded. British APGs that form in response to particular crises or upcoming events also similarly dissolve once the problems are resolved or the events are over.

However, many other APGs continue after their original purpose has been fulfilled. In certain cases the policy community formed by the APG may wish to maintain the collaboration, and develop expanded goals. In other cases, groups may adopt new objectives, or continue to monitor the implementation of policy changes promised by the government. A case in point is the APPG on Deep Vein Thrombosis, which was established in 2002 “To raise awareness of the health risks of deep vein thrombosis [a blood clotting disorder] for travelers and to promote education and research with a view to reducing those risks” (United Kingdom. House of Commons, 2005b). The group’s formation came after the deaths of several air travelers received extensive media attention (“MP to lead DVT deaths probe,” 2002). However, the same year a number of medical professionals launched the charity Thrombosis UK to draw attention not only to thrombosis caused by air travel, but also the larger problem of venous thromboembolism (VTE) acquired during hospital visits (Hunt, 2008).46 Advocacy by the charity and the APG convinced the

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46 At the time of its founding in 2002, Thrombosis UK was known as “Lifeblood.”
Commons’ Health Select Committee to conduct an inquiry on the prevention of VTE in hospitalized patients, which produced a series of recommendations for the health system (United Kingdom. House of Commons. Health Select Committee, 2005).

After the 2006 election, the group was refounded as the *APPG on Thrombosis*, with the new mandate “To promote awareness amongst parliamentarians about the risk and management of venous thromboembolism (VTE); to increase knowledge of its causes, effects, treatments; and to monitor the implementation of government initiatives and other research being undertaken” (United Kingdom. Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, 2008). In 2007, ongoing pressure from the APG, the Select Committee, Thrombosis UK, and others finally convinced the government to develop a strategy to implement the Committee’s recommendations (Hunt, 2008). Yet rather than disbanding, the *APPG on Thrombosis* has continued to audit the government’s performance, conducting annual surveys of health authorities to monitor their progress in implementing the VTE prevention strategy. Despite these changes in focus, the group was chaired by the same parliamentarian, Labour MP John Smith, from 2002 until his retirement in 2010.

This continuation of APG activity suggests a certain inertia, with many parliamentarians continuing to operate the APGs they helped to establish once the groups are set in motion. As a result, the most common reason why groups may cease operations is that the parliamentarians who led them were defeated at election or stood down from political life. This outcome is particularly common among APGs on niche issues, or those that lack strong external partners, since there are fewer parliamentarians who may be interested in becoming the new chair. For instance, the British APPGs for Astronomy and Classics did not reform after their chairs (MPs David Heathcoat Amory and Mark Fisher, respectively) did not return to parliament following the 2010 election. Likewise, the Canada-Jordan and Canada-Libya friendship groups ceased operations in after their chair, Senator Mac Harb, resigned from the Senate in 2013. Recognizing this situation, one British MP was concerned that the group he chaired would cease to exist once he retired, and so planned to recruit his replacement before departing: “And I have to say that if I decided not to be the chair, the group would probably fold. So when I decide to stand down, which probably won’t be at the next election, I’ll make sure that there will be someone who's going to come along and take over and do it” (confidential interview, November 2012). Several
of the secretariat organizations interviewed similarly described having to recruit new chairs after
the incumbent left parliament or resigned from the group.

However, the failure of an APG to reform after the election does not necessarily mean its
permanent demise. Instead, groups can sometimes be reestablished if a new parliamentarian is
later elected with an interest in the issue. A case in point are the Canada-Lebanon and Canada-
Tunisia friendship groups that dissolved after their Chair, MP Yvon Charbonneau, retired at the
2004 election. After several years of absence, the groups were eventually re-established in 2008
and 2013, respectively, by parliamentarians of Lebanese (MP Maria Mourani) and Tunisian (MP
Sana Hassainia) descent. At Westminster there were 22 APGs that were registered in both 1996
and 2014, but were absent for one or more of the intervening legislative sessions.

Several other reasons for group dissolution were also encountered. APG numbers may decline
due to mergers between groups. In some cases these mergers may take on a new name, as when
the previously separate APPGs on the Royal Navy, Royal Air Force, Royal Marines, and the
Army merged into the new APPG on the Armed Forces in 2010 (“All-Party Groups: A
Comprehensive Guide,” 2011). At other times the resulting group will keep the name of one the
original APGs, such as when the APPG for Underground Space was absorbed into the APPG on
Infrastructure (“All Party Parliamentary Group on Infrastructure,” 2013). However, as noted
above, many of those involved with different APGs are reluctant to merge their groups for fear
that the unique characteristics of their communities or issues will be lost within the broader
focus.

Although uncommon, the possibility of group mergers means that even where APG registries
exist, it can still be challenging to precisely track the dissolution and creation of APGs over time.
In the UK, this process is made all the more difficult by the fact that British APGs will often
change their names when reforming after an election. In some cases the changes are relatively
straightforward, as when the APPG on Patient and Public Involvement in Health became the
APPG on Patient and Public Involvement in Health and Social Care, or the APPG on Umbilical
Cord Blood and Adult Stem Cells reformed as the APPG on Stem Cells. In others, however, the
name change is more difficult to track, as when the APPG on Sustainable Waste rebranding as
the Sustainable Resource Group, and the APPG on Gas Safety becoming the APPG on Carbon
Monoxide.
In rare cases APGs may also dissolve due to internal group conflicts. Two such instances were found at Holyrood, not due to conflict among parliamentarians, but rather tensions among the stakeholders, or between the stakeholders and legislators. One occurred when the CPG on Autism ceased operations in the Parliament’s second session after the group’s external partners became divided between those seeking improved services for persons with autism and those wanting to campaign against vaccines on the grounds that they caused the condition. As the quotations below make clear, the MSPs involved felt that the group could not continue without a greater consensus, particularly in the face of personal attacks:

I thought it was going to be about supporting people with autism, and there were a lot of groups who came into it thinking this is going to be a voice for autistic people – like what sort of services do autistic people get, what sort of support do the autistic kids get in school; so it was going to be, I thought, going to cover education, health, social services and all that kind of stuff. Unfortunately there were other groups who saw it as a campaign tool to campaign against the use of MMR [the mumps, measles, and rubella vaccine]… So it was setup for all of the right reasons and collapsed for all of the wrong reasons. So there has been an element where some groups have arisen and then folded because they didn’t quite work out (confidential interview, December 2012).

It was awful. The Convener at the time… eventually called a halt to it. It was really down to one or two individuals who spoiled it and one person in particular who was the father of an autistic son… He said we weren’t doing what we were meant to do. He sent horrible emails. It was getting really quite difficult and so that group was stopped and hasn’t reconvened. Although quite a lot or work goes on with people in the field of autism but just not through a formal CPG because it just didn’t work (confidential interview, November 2012).

The second instance was somewhat similar, occurring in 2012 when the CPG on Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME) dissolved following a conflict between the external members and MSPs as to who should be included in the group and what its focus should be. The members actually held a vote as to whether the group should rely solely on the clinical definition of ME as outlined by the World Health Organization, or continue using the broader term of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. The vote reportedly passed with strong support from the external partners, but opposition from the MSPs, prompting the MSPs involved to resign and dissolve the group (Britton, 2012). One MSP described the events this way:

The key issue there would be an inability to reach a consensus on what the purpose of the group should be, so after repeated attempts to try and find consensus to establish working groups to look at specific issues where the hope
had been to reach agreement on what we were trying to achieve, it just wasn’t possible in the end. In a way you could argue that the parliamentarians…some of the stakeholders lost confidence in the parliamentarians and I think it’s fair to say the parliamentarians – and I include myself in this – lost confidence in some of the stakeholders… The main issue of disagreement was about whether the group should cover people with any Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, which to me just feels like a pretty esoteric…angels on the head of a pin type of discussion. But for some of the stakeholder organizations this was absolutely critical, that the organization should be focused only on ME… I think cross-party groups should be aligning with the policy agenda and within health service. Healthcare practitioners in terms of best practice internationally talk about ME / Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, you don’t just talk about ME. To exclude people who have, because they don’t have the correct diagnosis doesn’t seem to me to be the right approach. So that was the main stumbling block in terms of issues in the end which meant they couldn’t continue (confidential interview, December 2012).

These two examples suggest that the greater role given to external stakeholders within the APGs at Holyrood comes with both advantages and some significant disadvantages. While providing a forum where all interested parties can interact and develop joint solutions, they also risk becoming dysfunctional if there is no consensus among the external partners, or if there is a difference of opinion between the external partners and MSPs. By comparison, APGs in Canada or at Westminster have no similar requirement for inclusiveness, allowing them to focus solely on one side of an issue, or to agree only to exchange ideas and to refrain from policy advocacy.

6 Conclusion

Tracing the circumstances that prompt the creation and dissolution of APGs yields a number of insights into the forces that have driven the growth of APGs in recent years. Echoing Hammond’s (1998) findings from the US Congress, many groups across the four jurisdictions are formed due to the perceived failure of existing institutions to deal with various policy issues. In some cases this is because policy issues might fall between the jurisdictions of formal parliamentary committees, or because they are too narrow for the committees to examine. However, APGs have also been used to overcome broader institutional failings in their home jurisdictions, such as the lack of a coordinating mechanism for Canadian MPs and Ontarian MPPs interested in the Trent-Severn waterway, or the absence of a means to represent the views of the various British overseas territories within the parliamentary debates at Westminster.

APG formation can also be triggered by changes in the policy or societal contexts in which a legislature operates, or in the makeup of the legislature itself. While Hammond noted that APGs
will form in response to the development of new policy issues or short-term policy problems, this chapter further illustrates how group creation can also be driven by the arrival of new parliamentarians with distinct identities and policy concerns, as well the emergence of new (or newly mobilized) social groups seeking political recognition. These trends reinforce Hammond’s contention that APG creation has been fueled by growing policy complexity, but further indicates that the number of APGs is also likely to rise as citizens and those who represent them grow more diverse, or seek broader recognition of their existing diversity.

While institutional failure or changes in the policy and societal context make group formation more likely, in most cases the actual creation of new groups results from pressure by external actors. These external actors are often inspired to create new APGs by the presence and activities of similar groups in the same policy area, leading to the clustering of APGs on certain topics. However, demonstration effects can also occur across policy fields, with some parliamentarians serving as “APG entrepreneurs” who repeatedly apply the APG model to new issue areas.

As Hammond argues, many of these forces can be linked to the broader phenomenon of an increasingly mobilized civil society and increased demands from citizens. Seen in this light, the problem of institutional failure results less from deficiencies in the design of legislative institutions and more from the fact the expectations being placed on them have grown. By and large, standing committees were not intended to focus on niche issues like specific diseases or industries. As a result, the creation of APGs expands the capacity of the legislature to engage with external actors who wish to have their concerns heard.

This broader social change creates ongoing demand for group activities, and contributes to their longevity. As the overview of group creation and dissolution reveals, APGs are largely enduring elements of the parliamentary landscape, with the vast majority surviving from one parliamentary session to the next. Curiously, this trend is particularly evident in Canada, perhaps reflecting dominance of inter-country groups among the country’s APGs. Such groups – including those without parliamentary support – are generally well removed from partisan conflict, possess steady support from diplomats and diasporic communities, and come with the potential for international travel, likely making it easier to recruit new group leaders should those holding the positions leave parliament. Those instances where dissolution does occur generally result from the departure of the group leaders. This reality underscores the importance of chairs
in maintaining APG operations. It also means APG mortality tends to expand with the number of parliamentarians who fail to return after an election.

Finally it should be noted that the factors that motivate the establishment of new APGs on given policy issues are distinct from those that shape whether parliamentarians will choose to become involved. For instance, while an external actor may seek to create a new APG to parliamentarians may refuse an external actor’s request for assistance in creating a new APG based on whether the issue is relevant to their constituencies, they are personally interested in the issue, or whether it relates to their parliamentary responsibilities. These factors that drive participation are explored in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 7

FACTORS SHAPING PARTICIPATION BY PARLIAMENTARIANS

1 Introduction

As outlined in Chapter Three, any theory explaining the growth of APGs must examine the factors that shape participation by both parliamentarians and external stakeholders. In addition, participation by parliamentarians must itself be disaggregated to examine the differential costs and benefits faced by those who serve as APG leaders versus those who are general members. This chapter begins this process by examining how elected legislators participate in APGs and the factors that shape this participation. Chapter Eight continues the analysis by examining the factors shaping participation by external stakeholders.

Whether involved as rank-and-file members or group leaders, parliamentarians’ participation in APGs can vary based on members’ performance, such as their margin of victory or leadership positions held; characteristics, such as partisan affiliation, time in office or gender; and personal motivations, such as representing their constituents, advancing policy change, securing promotion, or obtaining a sense of personal relevance. These factors may co-vary, but are not necessarily linked in all cases. Parliamentarians who are electorally vulnerable may focus on securing benefits for their constituencies in hopes of obtaining better results at the next election. Yet legislators in safe seats may also position themselves as constituency champions, believing it to be the proper role of elected politicians. Further complicating matters is that the behaviours that help some politicians to secure their objectives may hinder others. While one Canadian parliamentarian reported that participating in an officially recognized inter-country group helped him to represent his constituents, another said that his constituents would see such travel as a waste of tax dollars (confidential interviews, November and December 2013).

The chapter begins by reviewing the existing literature on the factors that shape APG participation, much of which comes from the United States. These studies report that APG involvement is associated with a range of factors that can vary both between jurisdictions and
also over time. Previous findings regarding the impact of margin of victory and time in office on group participation are especially contradictory, with Hammond (1998) reporting that participation was higher among the more marginal and more junior Members of Congress, while Ringe et al. (2013) later found the reverse. These inconsistencies indicate that the factors shaping APG participation among legislators may be difficult to generalize across jurisdictions.

Next, the chapter provides statistical analyses of how APG participation by parliamentarians in Canada, the UK and Scotland is shaped by performance and personal characteristics. Wherever the data permit, the analysis disaggregates involvement in inter-country groups from subject groups, and distinguishes participation at the executive and general membership levels. The results reveal little in the way of common trends across the three cases with sufficient numbers of APGs to permit statistical analysis: the Canada, Scotland, and the UK. Indeed, the only consistent relationships were that government ministers were less active in APGs at both the general member and leadership levels, while women were consistently more active as rank-and-file members, at least in subject groups.

In keeping with the historical institutionalist, process tracing approach of the study, the remainder of the chapter explores the results of this analysis using insights from interviews with parliamentarians, journalists, and stakeholders in each jurisdiction studied, including Ontario. In this process particular attention is paid to how members’ characteristics and performance interact with their motivations to shape their engagement with APGs.

Unlike some prior research from the United States, the results suggest that APGs are not used by members to seek broader power within the legislature. Yet outside of this fact, the motivations that actually drive members’ participation are quite diverse. Some seek to connect with their constituents for electoral reasons or out of genuine concern. Others are motivated by personal interest in a topic, or because it helps them with their broader parliamentary responsibilities. Still others, having been unable to obtain a cabinet position, seek to find an alternative career path, personal enjoyment, or a sense of relevance. In many instances, these motivations overlap, and the same parliamentarian may join different APGs for different reasons. However, the more involved a parliamentarian is in the activities of a group – and the more costly it becomes in terms of her time and resources – then the more significant her motivation for involvement tends to be. Parliamentarian may join groups solely to acquire information that may be relevant to their
committee work, but they are unlikely to create those groups or to lead them over the long term. Instead, group founders tend to be those who have a greater commitment to the issue due to a connection with their constituencies or personal interests.

2 Existing research

Past research into the factors shaping politicians’ participation in APGs has focused primarily on systematic differences between legislatures, such as electoral system and the number of parties, as well as the characteristics and performance of individual politicians. However, the literature regarding the impact of such individual level factors can be contradictory, with those found to increase APG involvement in one study being found to decrease it in others, even in the same jurisdiction. Politicians’ actual motivations for participating in APGs have also been explored to some extent, but typically only within a rational-actor model which assumes that APG participation must be a means to achieving tangible outcomes, such as the goals of reelection, policy change, or institutional influence that were identified by Fenno (1973). Much less attention has been paid to the potential for subjective or cognitive motivations for APG participation, such as personal enjoyment, or feelings of satisfaction and relevance.

The existing research into the systematic factors shaping APG participation by parliamentarians was briefly noted in Chapter Three. Researchers have long found that legislators in the American Congress use APGs as a way to signal support for certain policy preferences to constituents, a reality attributed to the incentive to cultivate a personal vote that is inherent within the SMP electoral system (Hammond, 1998; Ringe et al., 2013). Based on this finding, Ringe et al. (2013) hypothesized that APGs would be more prevalent in countries that use majoritarian electoral systems than those using proportional representation systems. This proposition was confirmed in their empirical analysis of the presence of APGs in advanced democracies, with the use of a majoritarian electoral system being a better predictor of the presence of APG activity than any other variable examined.47 As such, Ringe et al. conclude that “a greater need for signalling preferences and priorities to constituents increases the likelihood of the existence of [APGs]”

47 In addition to differences in electoral system, Ringe et al. (2013) also found that APGs were more prevalent in larger legislatures and those with a larger than average number of parties, an outcome attributed to the greater need for coordination between members and parties in such assemblies. However, these findings are of less use to this study as they concern political systems on the whole rather than incentives for participation by individual legislators.
(Ringe et al., 2013). In their interviews with legislators at the US Congress and the European Parliament, the latter were also less likely to report joining an APG due to a constituency connection, instead highlighting factors such as personal interest, an overlap with their committee duties, or the potential to develop their professional profile.

The assumption that APGs serve as a way to signal to constituents and build a personal vote would logically lead to two corollaries: (1) that the groups joined by legislators will reflect the characteristics of the constituencies they represent, and (2) that, ceteris paribus, those legislators who are more electorally vulnerable will join more APGs in hopes of attracting more electoral support. The first of these propositions is generally confirmed in the literature from the United States. In her study of APG membership in the 108th Congress, Miler (2011) found that members from districts that are more diverse in political, racial, or economic terms belonged to more caucuses than their colleagues from more homogenous districts. Legislators from districts with specific electorally relevant characteristics, such as the presence of a given industry, were more likely to join APGs which reflected those traits, and those from districts with more foreign-born residents were also more active in inter-country caucuses. In the same vein, King and Pomper (2004) found that the nine states that held over 84 per cent of Armenian Americans also were home to 80 per cent of the members of the Congressional Caucus on Armenia.

Constituency factors have even been found to influence participation in those APGs on topics that appear unlikely to decide the outcome of elections. For instance, McCormick and Mitchell (2007) examined the membership of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, which seeks to shape America’s response to international human rights issues. At first glance, the caucus’ general international focus would seem to give it little connection to electoral politics, since most voters cast their ballots based on domestic issues. Yet McCormick and Mitchell still found that constituency characteristics, such as the proportion of foreign-born residents and the presence of Amnesty International chapters, also played significant roles. However, given that lobbyists and constituents frequently pressure representatives to become involved in particular groups, members may join solely for the purpose of signalling to these outside stakeholders without intending to participate in caucus activities (Ringe et al., 2013).

While the first corollary of the link between majoritarian electoral systems and APG participation is clearly supported in the literature, the same cannot be said for the second.
Instead, studies from the US Congress have at times produced conflicting results regarding the relationship between electoral marginality and APG participation. On one side, Hammond (1998) found that APG membership was somewhat higher among Members of Congress who were electorally marginal. As such, she argued that APGs provided a way for such electorally vulnerable members to better connect with their constituents. Yet writing a decade later, Victor and Ringe’s (2009) analysis of APG participation in the 110th Congress found that participation increased with a member’s margin of victory, suggesting that APGs were more popular among more electorally secure legislators. Based on this finding, Victor and Ringe conclude that:

These findings suggest that marginal members do not use caucuses to improve their electoral fortunes in the future by signalling to their constituents both their policy priorities and their activism. Instead, they appear reluctant to join caucuses… Perhaps, it is the case that electorally safe legislators have the luxury of spending more time in Washington, D. C., cultivating relationships with their colleagues rather than spending it in the district wooing voters. Whatever the reason, the results show that legislators with an electoral advantage have the additional advantage of being more central and more connected in the caucus network (2009: 759)

These results are confirmed by Ringe et al. (2013) using a broader dataset covering the 109-111th Congresses. However, the authors do not attempt to explain how these findings can be squared with their study of APG presence across jurisdictions, or how they can maintain the assumption about the relationship between majoritarian electoral systems and signalling through APGs on which that analysis it is based.

Similar inconsistencies can also be seen in the relationship between Hammond (1998) and Ringe et al. (2013) on the question of the relationship between APG involvement and time in office. The former found that newer members of the House of Representatives tended to join more groups, with involvement declining the longer they served. In contrast, the analysis conducted by Ringe et al. (2013) indicated that involvement in Congressional APGs was actually lower among new members and tended to rise with time in office.

These different findings regarding the impact of electoral vulnerability (a performance factor) and time in office (an individual characteristic) suggest that the APGs at the US Congress may be playing a different role at present than they did in the 1980s and early 1990s when Hammond conducted her research. Indeed, such shifts should likely not be surprising given the substantial changes over intervening period in the number of APGs, the rules governing APG operation
(described in Chapter Three), and the broader political context. This potential evolution in the role of APGs indicates that the factors that drove the initial formation of APGs in different legislatures may not be the same that drove their mass expansion in recent years. It also suggests that APG participation is not so tied to electoral concerns as some have argued.

Looking beyond margin of victory and time in office, a seemingly universal finding is that those holding formal leadership positions tend to be involved in fewer APGs than backbench or rank-and-file members (Hammond, 1998; Morgan, 1979; Ringe et al., 2013). As for individual characteristics, research from the US has repeatedly shown that APG membership patterns vary between Republicans and Democrats, with the latter being consistently more involved in group activities (Hammond, 1998; Ringe et al., 2013). Similar differences exist between the party groups at the European Union as well, with participation being higher among the four ideologically centrist party groups (European People’s Party; Progressive Alliance of Social Democrats; Alliance of Liberals and Democrats; and the Greens – Free European Alliance), and somewhat lower among members of the smaller, more ideologically polarized groups (European United Left – Nordic Green Left and the European Conservatives and Reformists) (Ringe et al., 2013).

Legislators’ demographic backgrounds have also been found to influence APG involvement. While no relationship was evident at the US Congress, Ringe et al. (2013) found that female MEPs joined significantly more groups than their male colleagues. They also report that caucasian members of congress joined more APGs than their colleagues from minority groups. However, no explanation was provided to account for the results.

Turning to the question of motivations, as noted in Chapter Three, Hammond (1998) draws heavily from her empirical findings (i.e. higher participation among new and electorally insecure members) to argue that participation in APGs was a rational response by legislators seeking to pursue the goals of reelection, policy change, and institutional influence in an environment characterized by growing demands from citizens, increased media attention, greater policy complexity, and institutional reforms that had concentrated influence in the hands of party and committee members. For electorally insecure members, APGs provide a tool to signal and connect with their constituents in hopes of achieving reelection. For new members, they provide a way to pursue policy change and to seek formal leadership positions by allowing members to
network with other legislators and external organizations, demonstrate leadership potential, and develop policy expertise. Group participation is then seen to decline as members used this capital to move into formal leadership positions. Given limits on their office budgets, personal time, and staff time, the legislators interviewed by Hammond also reported going through a cost-benefit analysis when choosing which groups to join and how much effort to put forth.

Somewhat similar arguments are made by Morgan (1979) in his study of APGs at Westminster. He contends that backbench members participate in APGs to gain expertise and “added status” in the hopes of pushing back against the growing concentration of power within the executive, in part due to rising policy complexity. Importantly, this “added status” offered by APGs resulted from the rise of media influence on the political system that was occurring at the time, with APGs being a “platform” that politicians could use to increase their own visibility. However, in contrast to Hammond’s observations from Congress, Morgan reports that the ministers and whips he interviewed “made it quite obvious that the groups would not help one in one's career within the party” (1979: 63). As such, he found that APGs were favoured by parliamentarians who preferred patient networking and coalition building rather than those with strong partisan ambitions. Much the same conclusion was also reached by Searing in his study of the roles that British MPs adopt for themselves within Parliament. APGs, he reported, were 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” on policy issues (1994: 53).

The ministers and whips interviewed by Morgan also suggested a further motivation for participation in APGs, describing them as “Generally… being a means of keeping Members happy or as vehicles for personal advancement” instead of vehicles for policy influence (1979: 63). However, Morgan (1979) such suggestions that APGs are just ‘busy work,’ noting that the same ministers also admitted that they at times consulted with APGs on policy issues. Nevertheless, their views highlight the need to consider the extent to which legislators’ engagement with APGs is motivated by subjective factors that go beyond the attainment of more measurable goals, such as policy change, reelection, or promotion within the institution. Such subjective factors could include feelings of relevance, importance, or job satisfaction, and would appear to be particularly important to those backbench members passed over for promotion.
Ringe et al. also highlight the role of personal factors in shaping APG involvement at the leadership level, presenting legislators as being just as likely to create a group to advance their personal interests as to engage with constituents:

Individual legislators and their offices or small groups of lawmakers often choose to expend some of their limited resources on creating and maintaining [APGs]. They may do so for personal reasons. For example, legislators who have loved ones affected by Alzheimer’s disease might be prompted to form an [APG] devoted to finding a cure, or lawmakers may be union members and seek to provide a forum for labor issues. Alternatively, legislators may have reason to establish an [APG] because it reflects a key concern of their constituencies or because they did not get the committee assignments of their choice and use the [APG] to pursue particular interests. Any such reason may serve as a strong enough incentive for legislators to take on the task and the costs of establishing and running [APGs] (2013: 42).

When combined with their finding that new and electorally marginal legislators are less likely to engage in APG activity, Ringe et al.’s results would suggest that APGs provide a tool for established, electorally secure legislators to pursue their interests.

A further rationale for APG involvement can also be found throughout the literature on APG activity in Canada and the UK, namely personal enjoyment. As noted previously in Chapter Five, research on the inter-country APGs in Canada has found that many parliamentarians only join the groups in hopes of being eligible for international travel (Levy, 1974; Parliamentary Centre, 2003). Similarly in the UK, Jordan stressed that travel through APGs was used as part of the broader effort by APGs’ external partners to attract parliamentarians to group activities. As he wrote:

Criticism has emerged that these committees exist not so much to inform legislators as to seduce. In 1982 it was claimed that the All Party Motor Industry Committee visited France as guests of Renault, and Germany as guests of Volkswagen. The Road Study Group went to Switzerland—paid for by the road transport and construction industry. Dennis Skinner, MP, complained, “It’s funny how so many of these trips seem to take place to countries in the tropics during the winter months. You don’t find them going on fact finding missions to Greenland in the middle of winter” (1985: 178).

Overall, the existing literature suggests that there is no single reason why parliamentarians join APGs as either general members or group leaders. Instead, different factors appear to be at play in different jurisdictions, and even within the same jurisdictions at different time points. In some
cases APG involvement appears to be driven by electoral concerns; in others by personal interest; and in still others by personal rewards. As such the analysis in the rest of the chapter explores a wide range of possible motivations for membership, including those that are directly measurable, such as policy change or personal travel, and those that are more subjective, like feelings of personal relevance.

3  Membership trends and analysis

To explore the factors shaping parliamentarians’ participation in APGs, datasets were created that tracked both the general membership and executive posts that legislators held in British, Canadian, and Scottish APGs over several parliamentary sessions. These data were then combined with information on each legislator’s demographic background, electoral performance, and leadership positions to allow for an analysis of the individual characteristics and circumstances that shape group membership. Differences in data availability, group structure, and political institutions across the cases mean that the analysis for each jurisdiction utilizes different variables. However, while partially limiting the comparability of results, in the end these differences allow the analysis to shed light on a wider range of theoretical questions.

The following sections first describe data employed, the variables analysed, and the methods used before presenting the results obtained. These findings indicate that there are a range of characteristics and performance factors that are correlated with parliamentarians’ participation in APG in each jurisdiction. Yet these correlations do not in and of themselves explain why the parliamentarians possessing such traits exhibit the behaviours observed, and attempting to infer the reasons for correlations solely from the statistical data can lead to faulty conclusions based on unobserved variables. As such, the insights gleaned through the interviews are used wherever possible to trace out and identify the actual factors that lead different groups of parliamentarians to exhibit the behaviours observed.

3.1  Data availability

The data available for analysis varied substantially between the jurisdictions depending on the structure of the groups and the information made available by the respective legislatures. While the vast majority of APGs in the UK choose to register, the parliamentary authorities only maintain copies of its APG registry for the past five years. Thankfully older registries were found
on the Internet Archive (www.archive.org) and the UK Web Archive (www.webarchive.org.uk), making it possible to extend the study back for 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.

Webscraping software was used to extract the data from the registries. 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, the British and Scottish data were extracted from the last registry available in each session before the next general election. While the Scottish data were complete for both executive and general members since the parliament was founded, the UK registry only began to publicly post membership data in 2004, and even then the list was limited to the 20 “qualifying members” required for registration. In the end, membership data for British APGs were available for 2005, 2010 and 2014, and executive data were obtained for those years as well as 1996 and 2001.

For Canada, the Parliament’s International and Inter-parliamentary Affairs directorate generously provided a nearly complete set of membership and executive data for Canada’s officially 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 its lists of unrecognized inter-country APGs for the same period, although the data provided was limited only to the names of group chairs, and efforts to construct a full list of group members and executives was blocked by the fact that many unrecognized inter-country APGs consider such information to be confidential. As such, information for the unrecognized inter-country APGs is limited to chairs only.

The complete lack of any record keeping for Canada’s subject-focused APGs meant that one had to be constructed using interviews, 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 2011-2015 parliament. Efforts to acquire membership data were also hindered by the fact that several groups either do not have formal
members, or consider such lists to be confidential. However, complete membership lists were located for seven subject-focused APGs in the 2011-2015 parliament:

- All-Party Aerospace Caucus
- All-Party Entrepreneur Caucus
- All-Party Golf Caucus
- All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity
- Canadian Association of Parliamentarians for Population and Development
- Canadian chapter of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament
- Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care

Given that these groups had a combined 220 members and dealt with a diverse range of topics, the data are included in the analysis. However, given the limited number of groups, the findings should be treated with caution. Also, unlike the data from Scotland and the UK, the membership and executive information for Canada’s subject groups does not come from a single point in time within the 2011-2015 Parliament. As such, it is possible that different factors may be shaping the membership patterns for each group depending on the time that the list was compiled.

Only minimal data were available for the APGs at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, consisting of the executive members of the All-Party Cycling Caucus, and the general members of the Lung Health Caucus. As such, it was not possible to perform any meaningful analysis. However, factors shaping APG participation at Queen’s Park are considered in the qualitative analysis later in the chapter.

Before moving on, some limitations to the data from the other cases must also be acknowledged. As noted in Chapter Five, while some British groups had more than the 20 qualifying members, many others struggled to meet this threshold. As a result, parliamentarians often agreed to add their names without any intention of being active, while some APGs went so far as to list parliamentarians as group members without their knowledge. The situation was similar in Scotland, with members of the smaller parties putting their names forward so that APGs could form while remaining largely inactive. While such minimum thresholds do not exist in most Canadian groups, it is also the case that parliamentarians may join APGs and even serve on their executives solely in hopes of securing foreign travel, or to help a colleague win a leadership position. Given these realities it is possible that the information used in the analysis may not
reflect parliamentarians’ true engagement with APGs. Indeed, in all three parliaments even those serving as executive members were not always involved in APG activities on a regular basis.

Unfortunately, the sheer volume of information makes it impossible to verify parliamentarians’ actual level of engagement in each group or their personal reasons for joining. Indeed, for the UK alone there were 8,803 executive posts held by MPs between 1996 and 2014, and a further 25,481 group memberships held between 2005 and 2014. As such, for the purposes of this analysis, the data obtained will be assumed to be roughly representative of parliamentarians’ true levels of engagement. Moreover, even those who are not active in the APGs to which they belong may have joined as a way of signalling to their constituents or outside stakeholders, making such engagement, superficial though it may be, analytically relevant.

3.2 Variable selection

As described above, past research from other jurisdictions suggests that legislators’ participation in APGs by is shaped by their electoral performance and the desire of new members to develop and demonstrate leadership potential. Moreover, the literature indicates that there are different incentives for those who serve as APG leaders versus those who join as regular members, and that the factors shaping participation may be different for inter-country versus subject groups. The combination of these potential factors and the available data produces six dependent variables for the UK, namely the number of membership and executive positions held in inter-country APGs, subject APGs, and in both types combined. The Canadian data similarly permit the exploration of five dependent variables:

- memberships held in the 16 officially recognized inter-country APGs;
- executive positions held in the 16 officially recognized inter-country APGs;
- chair posts held in the unrecognized inter-country groups;
- memberships held in subject groups in the 41st Parliament;
- executive positions held in subject groups in the 41st Parliament.

In Scotland, the low number of inter-country APGs meant that MSPs’ participation in APGs could not be disaggregated into separate variables based on group type. The fact that Scotland employs a mixed-member plurality electoral system also makes it impossible to examine the relationship between electoral performance and APG participation in a single regression equation. Instead, constituency and regional MSPs must be disaggregated so that their distinct
electoral incentives can be captured. At the same time, however, theoretical predictions regarding the differences in APG participation between legislators elected by proportional representation and SMP make it important to explore if those who won their seats through one mechanism or the other are more active in APG activities. As such, six dependent variables were investigated for Scotland, namely the number of memberships and executive posts held by constituency MSPs, regional MSPs, by all MSPs together.

In terms of the independent variables, electoral performance is operationalized using legislators’ margin of victory as a percentage of votes cast. The only exception is for regional MSPs in Scotland, for whom electoral performance is captured through their party’s regional vote share. Parliamentarians’ career stage is operationalized with a dummy variable that identifies those legislators serving in their first term. Importantly, the desire to capture the impact of career stage means that the first session of the Scottish Parliament is excluded from the analysis since all MSPs were new to their roles. In each regression, dummy variables are used to identify those holding leadership positions in the cabinet or shadow cabinet, and also for gender and party affiliation. For Scotland, a dummy variable is also included for regional MSPs in the combined regression for all MSPs.

3.3 Analytical methods

The dependent variables used in this study are all counts of the number of APGs that parliamentarians have joined at different points in time. This reality has important implications for the statistical analysis given that count data are not normally distributed, and therefore cannot be subjected to standard linear regression techniques. The situation is further complicated by the fact that most of the dependent variables also violate the expectations of the Poisson distribution, which is typically used for the study of count data. Specifically, the Poisson distribution assumes that a variable’s mean will be equal to its variance. Instead, with exception of the data for participation subject-focused APGs at the Canadian Parliament, all of the dependent variables employed are “overdispersed,” with variances that exceed their means (Hilbe, 2011). As such, negative binomial regressions, which account for this overdispersion, are used in the majority of the analyses presented below.

A further complication emerges from the time period covered by the study. Again with the exception of the Canadian subject data, all of the dependent variables for legislators’
participation in APGs were measured at multiple points in time. Since many politicians in Ottawa, Westminster, and Holyrood have served for several parliamentary terms, they consequently appear more than once in the dataset. This repetition is unavoidable, and is actually advantageous since makes it possible to explore how parliamentarians’ engagement with APGs changes as they spend more time in office or their electoral fortunes shift. However, the presence of repeated measures of the same individual also violates assumptions regarding the independence of each observation in a dataset (Hilbe, 2011).

This problem can be overcome either through the use of a longitudinal regression model or the application robust variance estimators. Longitudinal models are structured to capture both the variation that happens at each time period and the variation that happens between them. However, the nature of the data used in this study is such that “fixed-effects” longitudinal models would be required.48 While such models are useful for specifying the impact of variables that change with time, such as margin of victory, they specifically omit characteristics of each case that do not change, such as gender or party. Given the importance of such factors to this study, robust variance estimators were employed instead. This method controls for repeated measures of the same individual by considering each case as a single observation that receives its own summary variance estimator (Hilbe, 2011). Ringe et al. (2013) also employed negative binomial regression with robust variance estimators in their analysis as well.

### 3.4 Membership trends and regression results

#### 3.4.1 United Kingdom

Tables 7.1 and 7.2 present an overview of the average numbers of APG memberships and executive posts held by British MPs, and how they vary both over time and with the different factors mentioned above. The negative binomial regression results in Table 7.3 then indicate which of the apparent trends in APG participation are statistically significant, and also how involvement varies with margin of victory.

48 Hausman tests indicated that random-effects longitudinal negative binomial models would not be reliable for models with the majority of the dependent variables used in the study.
Before considering such variations in participation, however, it is first helpful to examine the data on MP involvement in APGs contained in the bottom two rows of Tables 7.1 and 7.2. The figures in the former demonstrate that not only has the number of groups risen in recent years, but the proportion of MPs holding at least one executive position has also grown remarkably, jumping from 54 percent in 1996, to 70 percent in 2005, to 82 percent in 2014. This growth reflects the increase in average executive size noted in Chapter 5. It also indicates that the expansion of APG activity at Westminster has not been driven solely by a small number of MPs who form ever more groups, but rather is broadly based, with more MPs becoming involved in APGs as the number of groups rises. At the same time, the figures also show that this participation growth at the executive level is exclusively driven by the rising number of members involved with subject groups. Therefore not only has the number of inter-country groups stagnated in Britain over the past few parliamentary sessions, but so too has the proportion of parliamentarians who hold executive positions in these groups, suggesting they are failing to expand their appeal to more members.

By comparison, the figures in Table 7.2 show that engagement at the qualifying member level has remained consistently high in recent years, with marginal increases taking the proportion holding a membership in a least one group from 92 percent in 2005 to 96 percent in 2014. The contrast between this consistency and the rapid growth seen at the executive level indicates that British MPs have not moved directly from no participation in APGs to engagement at the executive level, but rather gradually deepened their involvement over time. However, the gap in the proportion of MPs involved with inter-country and subject groups can be seen at the level of qualifying memberships as well. While virtually all MPs who are members of inter-country groups are also members of subject groups, the reverse is not true and the gap has widened over time.

This stagnant participation rates in inter-country groups would appear to reflect the skeptical views of their activities in the media and the broader public. Several respondents noted or alluded to the past investigation that the Channel 4 program “Dispatches” had conducted into foreign travel by parliamentarians through APGs and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. The program was highly critical, portraying legislators as benefitting from lavish hospitality provided either by taxpayers or foreign lobbyists (Thomson, 2009). It also came in the midst of the UK’s MP expenses scandal, adding to the sense that MPs were profiting from their
positions. This view had been widely accepted, with one academic interviewed suggesting that I should factor the average temperature of the partner countries into my regression analysis to determine the true reason that members join (confidential interview, April 2013).

In keeping with this context, informants were quite keen to stress that the travel they had undertaken had been for legitimate purposes. As one MP stated, “It’s not junkets or anything. You soon get fed up living in and out of a hotel, but it’s all about making contacts with other parliamentarians” (confidential interview, November 2012). One APG administrator also noted that the way trips were operated had changed, with parliamentarians trying to avoid the perception that they were enjoying themselves. However, even with these changes the administrator claimed that it was becoming increasingly difficult to convince MPs to take part in travel through inter-country groups:

It can become kind of problematic, because the pressure to not get photographed with somebody holding a glass of wine is ridiculous. It’s breaking diplomatic protocol, but there is such a pressure not to be seen handing out wine to them… And the members don’t want to be seen on it. There are good reasons to take members on trips to places. You learn a lot more by seeing it, and talking to the people than you do by having a meeting in London. But it’s actually quite difficult to persuade them that it would be an acceptable use of the week of their time (confidential interview, November 2012).

This desire to avoid accusations of impropriety could be clearly seen in the reply given by a first-term MP when asked why parliamentarians join inter-country groups: “Have a look at all of those APPGs that have some connection to a sunny climate. You’ll probably find me on some of them but I’ve never been on an APPG jolly anywhere. But you know some people decide that they are going to become the world’s greatest expert on, oh let me pick a country, the Maldives” (confidential interview, November 2012). The suggestion that parliamentarians were more reluctant to be involved in inter-country APGs following the expenses and travel scandals is borne out in the membership trends presented in Table 7.2. The proportion of MPs holding a qualifying membership in an inter-country group peaked in 2010, the year following the scandal, and then declined in the subsequent parliamentary session.
Table 7.1 – Variation in the average number of APG executive posts held by British, by group type, demographic, party, and career factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average executive posts in inter-country APGs</th>
<th>Average executive posts in subject-focused APGs</th>
<th>Average executive posts in all APGs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All MPs</td>
<td>0.65  0.59  0.75  0.91  0.87</td>
<td>0.85  1.43  2.00  2.69  2.99</td>
<td>1.50  2.03  2.75  3.60  3.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returning</td>
<td>0.76  0.76  0.78  0.97  1.04</td>
<td>0.86  1.17  2.06  2.78  2.55</td>
<td>1.62  1.93  2.84  3.75  3.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-term</td>
<td>0.25  0.35  0.51  0.66  0.57</td>
<td>0.80  1.83  1.67  2.31  3.57</td>
<td>1.05  2.17  2.18  2.97  4.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0.67  0.63  0.83  0.99  0.96</td>
<td>0.82  1.43  2.01  2.72  2.87</td>
<td>1.49  2.06  2.84  3.72  3.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.29  0.38  0.41  0.47  0.47</td>
<td>1.02  1.36  1.88  2.48  3.10</td>
<td>1.31  1.74  2.29  2.95  3.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>0.64  0.81  1.04  1.19  0.93</td>
<td>0.74  1.56  2.14  2.77  2.77</td>
<td>1.38  2.36  3.18  3.96  3.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>0.65  0.47  0.62  0.75  0.86</td>
<td>0.82  1.19  1.69  2.29  2.78</td>
<td>1.47  1.66  2.31  3.04  3.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lib Dem</td>
<td>0.76  0.81  1.04  0.81  0.44</td>
<td>2.28  3.11  3.87  5.00  4.56</td>
<td>3.04  3.91  4.91  5.81  5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet member</td>
<td>0.09  0.16  0.16  0.14  0.25</td>
<td>0.00  0.05  0.05  0.00  0.04</td>
<td>0.09  0.21  0.21  0.14  0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gov. minister (incl. cabinet)</td>
<td>0.05  0.06  0.05  0.08  0.22</td>
<td>0.04  0.07  0.09  0.20  0.81</td>
<td>0.08  0.13  0.14  0.28  1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow cabinet member</td>
<td>0.15  0.24  0.39  0.40  0.14</td>
<td>0.23  0.29  1.00  1.52  0.64</td>
<td>0.38  0.52  1.39  1.92  0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow minister (incl. shadow cabinet)</td>
<td>0.40  0.63  0.81  0.90  0.58</td>
<td>0.84  1.42  1.99  2.68  2.93</td>
<td>1.07  2.06  2.61  3.07  2.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total groups</td>
<td>95    91    122    147    136</td>
<td>147    225    321    446    473</td>
<td>242    316    443    593    609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total posts</td>
<td>413   386   495    569    553</td>
<td>544    930   1301    1710   1902</td>
<td>957    1316   1796   2279   2455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># MPs holding</td>
<td>189   183   228    233    229</td>
<td>279    357    424    436    488</td>
<td>349    403    463    466    527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of MPs holding</td>
<td>29%   28%   35%    36%    35%</td>
<td>43%   54%   64%    67%    76%</td>
<td>54%   61%   70%    72%    82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7.2 – Variation in the average number of APG qualifying memberships held by British MPs, by group type, demographic, party, and career factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average memberships in inter-country APGs</th>
<th>Average memberships in subject-focused APGs</th>
<th>Average memberships in all APGs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All MPs</td>
<td>3.05 3.51 2.68</td>
<td>8.29 11.10 11.54</td>
<td>11.34 14.61 14.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returning</td>
<td>3.27 3.90 3.15</td>
<td>8.65 11.71 10.94</td>
<td>11.92 15.61 14.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-term</td>
<td>1.71 1.88 1.87</td>
<td>6.03 8.56 12.58</td>
<td>7.74 10.45 14.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.24 3.72 2.96</td>
<td>8.25 11.07 11.09</td>
<td>11.50 14.78 14.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2.13 2.32 1.45</td>
<td>8.33 10.50 12.14</td>
<td>10.46 12.82 13.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>4.52 4.44 2.75</td>
<td>11.09 12.43 9.90</td>
<td>15.61 16.88 12.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>2.51 3.23 2.82</td>
<td>6.86 10.26 12.66</td>
<td>9.37 13.49 15.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lib Dem</td>
<td>2.96 2.35 1.30</td>
<td>11.78 13.25 14.00</td>
<td>14.74 15.60 15.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>0.11 0.24 0.29</td>
<td>0.42 1.43 1.04</td>
<td>0.53 1.67 1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gov. minister</td>
<td>0.62 1.09 0.34</td>
<td>2.48 4.30 2.65</td>
<td>3.10 5.40 2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow cabinet</td>
<td>2.14 3.32 0.27</td>
<td>7.21 9.68 4.82</td>
<td>9.36 13.00 5.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow minister</td>
<td>4.07 3.69 1.59</td>
<td>10.58 10.77 10.87</td>
<td>14.65 14.46 12.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total memberships</td>
<td>1990 2200 1698</td>
<td>5407 7001 7365</td>
<td>7397 9201 9063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># MPs holding</td>
<td>431 436 403</td>
<td>596 603 610</td>
<td>608 608 619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of MPs holding</td>
<td>65% 67% 62%</td>
<td>90% 93% 94%</td>
<td>92% 94% 96%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking down the columns of Tables 7.1 and 7.2, in most cases returning MPs are more active than those in their first terms as both general and executive members. The only exceptions are in those years that follow a change in government, namely 2001 (after the 1997 Labour victory) and 2014 (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. While records were not available for 2001, the same trend is evident in the member-level data for subject groups from 2014. This post-election change suggests that the new members are filling posts left vacant by defeated or retired legislators from the old governing party, and indeed, several of the external APG sponsors interviewed spoke of the need to recruit such new parliamentarians if those involved prior to the election failed to return. This was particularly true among the external sponsors in the UK given the large turnover of MPs in the 2011 election.
Table 7.3 – Negative binomial regression analysis of factors shaping British MPs’ participation in APGs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Executive posts held</th>
<th></th>
<th>Memberships held</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coef. (SE)</td>
<td>Coef. (SE)</td>
<td>Coef. (SE)</td>
<td>Coef. (SE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ln margin of victory</td>
<td>-0.0960****</td>
<td>0.0104 (0.0224)</td>
<td>-0.0878****</td>
<td>0.0057 (0.0227)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0224)</td>
<td>(0.0431)</td>
<td>(0.0234)</td>
<td>(0.0371)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First term</td>
<td>-0.2063****</td>
<td>-0.7515**** (0.0473)</td>
<td>-0.2737****</td>
<td>-0.7656**** (0.0500)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0249)</td>
<td>(0.0940)</td>
<td>(0.0502)</td>
<td>(0.0881)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.0449 (0.0544)</td>
<td>-0.4522**** (0.1020)</td>
<td>0.0334 (0.0533)</td>
<td>-0.3634**** (0.0905)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0577)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0577)</td>
<td>(0.0528)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cons.</td>
<td>0.4541**** (0.1337)</td>
<td>0.6452**** (0.2119)</td>
<td>0.6830****</td>
<td>0.8068**** (0.1386)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.1349)</td>
<td>(0.1349)</td>
<td>(0.1947)</td>
<td>(0.1418)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>0.2397* (0.1310)</td>
<td>0.2908 (0.2086)</td>
<td>0.5407****</td>
<td>0.5210**** (0.1363)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.2412* (0.1324)</td>
<td>(0.1324)</td>
<td>(0.1923)</td>
<td>(0.1385)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lib Dem</td>
<td>0.8126**** (0.1423)</td>
<td>0.3761 (0.2322)</td>
<td>0.6180****</td>
<td>0.1400 (0.1476)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.9354**** (0.1463)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.2236)</td>
<td>(0.1504)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government minister</td>
<td>-2.2194**** (0.1313)</td>
<td>-2.3007**** (0.1734)</td>
<td>-1.3403****</td>
<td>-1.6227**** (0.0736)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.2009**** (0.1526)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1.526)</td>
<td>(0.1291)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow cabinet</td>
<td>-1.1601**** (0.1390)</td>
<td>-1.3394**** (0.2168)</td>
<td>-0.5460****</td>
<td>-0.7449**** (0.1233)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.0900**** (0.1626)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.2411)</td>
<td>(0.1127)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>1.0929**** (0.1438)</td>
<td>-0.3537 (0.2256)</td>
<td>2.4182****</td>
<td>0.8633**** (0.1474)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.8077**** (0.1460)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.2095)</td>
<td>(0.1487)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of obs.</td>
<td>3239</td>
<td>3239</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>1936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of MPs</td>
<td>1387</td>
<td>1387</td>
<td>1387</td>
<td>1387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log pseudo-likelihood</td>
<td>-6587.02</td>
<td>-3490.48 (0.0445)</td>
<td>-6780.21</td>
<td>-4098.51 (0.0408)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ln(alpha)</td>
<td>-0.0611</td>
<td>0.8117 (0.0664)</td>
<td>-0.3706</td>
<td>0.3565 (0.0408)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpha</td>
<td>0.9048</td>
<td>2.2517 (0.1496)</td>
<td>0.6904</td>
<td>1.4283 (0.0699)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.9652)</td>
<td>(0.0483)</td>
<td>(1.4283)</td>
<td>(0.0304)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

The regression results confirm that newly elected British MPs are significantly less likely to participate in APGs than those who have served at least one term. Moreover, with the exception of involvement in subject group executives, this relationship between career stage and participation is equally robust at both the general member and executive levels (P=0.001), and also appears to be unaffected by the surge in APG activity among 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.
As discussed further below, respondents suggested that MPs often turn to APGs to increase their policy influence or find personal relevance only after their hopes of a government or shadow government post have been dashed, thereby increasing APG activity among longer serving members and reducing it among those newly elected. In keeping with this argument, the regression results confirm that serving as a government minister (at any rank) or as a shadow cabinet member significantly reduced all forms of participation in APGs, although data tables indicate that the effect was much greater for the former than the latter. However, junior shadow ministers (i.e. those holding shadow portfolios but who are not part the shadow cabinet) had APG participation rates that were close to those of the average MP.

In terms of the impact of gender on APG activity, Tables 7.1 and 7.2 show remarkably consistent patterns, with women MPs simultaneously being significantly less involved in inter-country groups and more involved in subject groups in each of the five parliamentary sessions at both the qualifying member and executive level. However, the findings also show that these effects cancel each other out if women’s participation in APGs is considered as a whole, underscoring the importance of disaggregating analyses of APG activity by group type. One respondent suggested that women’s reduced participation in inter-country groups likely resulted from their greater family responsibilities, which hindered their ability to travel (confidential interview, May 2013). However, it remains unclear why women should simultaneously also be more involved in subject groups. It is possible that the increased subject group activity stemmed from the fact that women MPs in the UK tend to have lower margins of victory on average, and so may have been more engaged with APGs as a means to connect with and signal to their constituents.

Curiously, the pattern of APG engagement among Liberal Democrat MPs is similar to that among women, with Tables 7.1 and 7.2 revealing that they too having below average participation as members of inter-country groups, but above the average involvement in subject-focused groups at both the general member and executive levels. Moreover, this pattern persisted even after the party became part of the coalition government in 2010. In contrast, Conservatives held a greater than average number of memberships and executive posts in both geographic and subject groups during their years in opposition (1997-2010), but were somewhat below average when in government in 1996 and again in 2014. Though less pronounced, a similar pattern can be seen among Labour MPs, who had a substantially lower than average number of executive
and membership posts when in government, but were much closer to the average, if not slightly above, when in opposition.

Strangely, the regression results indicated that Conservative, Labour, and Liberal Democrat MPs were all significantly more likely to hold memberships in subject APGs relative to those from other parties. Conservative and Labour MPs were also more likely to hold memberships in inter-country groups as well. This finding reveals that those from the other parties at Westminster (primarily the Northern Irish parties and the nationalist parties from Scotland and Wales) were substantially less involved in APGs relative to their larger counterparts – a reality confirmed in the broader dataset.\footnote{Sinn Fein MPs were excluded from the analysis since they do not actually take their parliamentary seats.} However, the relationship between party and APG activity was weaker at the executive level, with only Conservative MPs being significantly more likely to hold executive positions in both subject and inter-country groups. By comparison, the relationship between Labour and Liberal Democrat MPs and executive positions was significant only for subject groups, and even then the result for Labour was significant only at P=0.1.

While Hammond’s (1998) study of APGs at the US Congress found that participation decreased with conservativism, these findings indicate that the opposite is true in Britain. Particularly unexpected is Conservative MPs’ consistently greater involvement in inter-country APGs, which would appear to be at odds with the party’s traditional euro-skeptic image. Respondents, however, were generally not surprised. When asked what might explain this international focus, they replied that the trend likely reflected the greater interest in foreign affairs among Conservative parliamentarians relative to those from Labour and the Liberal Democrats, who tended to be more concerned with social policy issues. Indeed, respondents stressed that Liberal Democrats lacked safe seats, and so tended to be elected on the back of extensive advocacy work in their constituencies, leaving them little capacity to spare for inter-country APGs. Moreover, the inter-country groups themselves were also described as being more focused on developing business links, which again was seen to appeal more to Conservative MPs.

Finally the regression results also indicate participation in APGs by British MPs is inversely related to their margin of victory. As such, electorally vulnerable MPs are more likely to participate in APG activities, presumably in the hopes of building support amongst constituents.
However, the relationship exists only for subject-focused groups, with memberships and executive posts in inter-country groups being unrelated to electoral success. This finding would generally be consistent with the varying participation patterns between the parties described above: electorally marginal MPs, like most Liberal Democrats, tend to view subject groups as a way to signal to and connect with their constituents, while seeing inter-country APGs as either an unaffordable drain on their time, or worse a liability to their reputation. Quotations from two Liberal Democrat MPs help to illustrate this point:

Liberal Democrats have much more marginal seats than either of the other two parties do. They [the other parties] have marginal seats, but they also have very, very safe ones. We don’t. I don’t think there’s any seats – maybe Orkney and Shetland you could say is a safe Liberal seat. But that’s about it, everything else has been built up over time. And broadly you are not going to get a lot of constituents saying, ‘I demand that you join the All-Party Group on French Polynesia, or something, and I would be very disappointed if you don’t go on trips there every other year.’ In fact, the reverse is likely to be true (confidential interview, November 2012).

It’s probably because, obviously historically we weren’t in government so it was a way of influencing policy and previous parliaments, and still is valid in this Parliament as well. And also probably because Liberal Democrat MPs tend to be ruthlessly focused on what they can do, because we don’t have many – much in the way of safe seats. So you have to be sort of ruthless with your time. I mean… I get invited practically every week to visit some country or another for whatever reason. I could spend my entire parliamentary life traveling to nice parts of the globe, and some MPs do that. And if you are the Labour MP for Rotherham… then you might spend quite a lot of your time traveling. So I think possibly because the other two parties have more in the way of safe seats, and also if you like they have more ‘spares’ amongst their parliamentary party who are not front benchers or who are not ministers, who aren’t Select Committee chairs or active participants in serious work. They can probably, let’s put it politely, afford to invest the time in visiting Bermuda or the Seychelles or wherever else they might be going. Some of these country groups are worthwhile… And I can justify that to my constituents, but I would find it virtually impossible to justify going to a nice tropical island in order to improve bilateral relations or whatever the motive is meant to be (confidential interview, November 2012).

Overall, the results indicate that a wide range of factors shape how British parliamentarians participate in APGs, with rates of engagement varying significantly based on individual characteristics like gender, party, and time in office, as well as performance factors like margin of victory and leadership positions held. Moreover, the data reveal that British MPs’ involvement in inter-country groups is influenced by somewhat different factors than their involvement in
subject groups. This can be seen in the differences in how margin of victory, gender, and party affiliation affect participation in the two types of groups. As such, examining both types of APGs together could cause certain relationships to go unobserved. In particular, the tendencies for female MPs to be less active in inter-country groups and more active in subject ones cancel each other out when looking at APG activity as a whole. At the same time, there were surprisingly fewer differences between the results for the executive and general membership levels, with the regression results showing just two instances where a relationship observed at one level was completely absent at the other (participation by first-term MPs in subject groups, and Labour MPs in inter-country groups). However, the variation does grow larger if one also considers changes in the significance of the relationships observed.

3.4.2 Canada

The lack of a full APG registry means that the information available regarding Canadian APGs is less comprehensive than for those in the UK or Scotland. Nevertheless, the Canadian data and regression results presented in Table 7.4 and 7.5 do yield several unexpected results. Perhaps the two most unexpected findings are contained in the figures on the proportion of MPs participating in APG activities. First, nearly 50 percent of MPs held at least one membership in the subject APGs examined. Given that membership information was available for just seven groups out of the 39 subject APGs active in Ottawa during the 2011 – 2015 parliamentary session, this figure would suggest that a substantial majority of Canadian MPs have at least some measure of engagement with subject-focused APGs. This finding is surprising given that such groups are generally not well known among either academics or the media.

The second unexpected result is that while the number of officially recognized inter-country groups has remained constant at 16, the proportion of MPs holding memberships in these groups steadily decreased year over year, falling from 83 percent to 52 percent in 2015. This drop runs counter to the situation in the UK, where stagnation in the number of inter-country groups was accompanied by stagnation in the number of MPs involved with them. This reduced engagement would appear to reflect the declining electoral fortunes of the Liberal and BQ parties throughout the period studied. Although not statistically significant in the regression results, the figures in Table 7.4 indicate the members of these parties both had above average levels of participation in the officially recognized inter-country APGs. They also were more likely to speak positively of
inter-country APGs and parliamentary diplomacy when interviewed. By comparison, involvement by Conservative and NDP parliamentarians was consistently either at or below average, and parliamentarians from these parties were more likely to question the utility of such groups, as the quotations below demonstrate:

I consider those enormous boondoggles. A complete abuse taxpayer funds. They are essentially junkets… I think that this will be the next area of serious investigation for the use of public funds” (Conservative Senator, confidential interview, December 2013).

So I have never been a part of a friendship group, and I don’t understand how they work… I don’t understand their usefulness, and I don’t understand why I should be part of them, other than to go on trips (NDP MP, confidential interview, April 2013).

As the number of BQ and Liberal MPs plummeted from 186 to 38 between 2006 and 2015, so too did the potential pool of participants in the officially recognized inter-country groups.

In keeping with this trend, the regression results reveal that NDP MPs were significantly less likely to be members of the recognized groups. Admittedly, at the executive level, the Conservatives were significantly more likely to hold leadership posts in the officially recognized groups. However, this would appear to be a product of the party’s tendency to take over all or most of the executive positions in those inter-parliamentary groups whose constitutions did not require the posts to be shared across party lines (Berthiaume, 2011). Indeed, Conservative MPs’ skepticism of the kind of multilateral parliamentary diplomacy conducted by a number of the recognized groups can be seen in their 2013 attempt to end Canada’s membership in the Inter-Parliamentary Union in favour of focusing more on bilateral exchanges (Shane, 2013). It will be interesting to see if the resurgence of the Liberals (and to a lesser extent the BQ) in Canada’s 2015 election will lead to an increase the proportion of MPs taking part in the recognized associations.
Table 7.4 – Variation in the average number of APG membership and executive posts held by Canadian MPs, by group type, demographic, party, and career factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average membership in officially recognized inter-country APGs</th>
<th>Average exec. posts in officially recognized inter-country APGs</th>
<th>Average chair posts in unrecognized inter-country APGs</th>
<th>Avg. subject memberships 2015</th>
<th>Avg. subject executive posts 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returning MP</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-term MP</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloc</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cons</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow cabinet</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total posts</td>
<td>999</td>
<td>988</td>
<td>1134</td>
<td>826</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># MPs holding</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of MPs holding</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Curiously, this decline in the proportion of MPs participating in the recognized inter-country APGs was not initially matched by a drop the number of memberships held. Instead, the membership levels actually grew between 2006 and 2011, only to crash down below the initial starting point in 2015. This finding suggests that those MPs who were concerned with the activities of the recognized inter-country groups increased their involvement by taking out multiple memberships during the three consecutive minority parliaments (2004-2006; 2006-2008; 2008-2011) as parties battled for group leadership positions. MPs reduced their involvement once the majority situation made it clear that the governing party could dominate the election process within each group. Support for this proposition can be found in the fact that the average number of memberships in officially recognized inter-country APGs fell for all parties in 2015, indicating that the drop in interest was widespread. However, further study is required since the trend only became evident after the interviews for this project were complete.

Looking more broadly to the regression results as a whole, Canadian MPs have significantly different patterns of participation in APGs than their British counterparts. Unlike the UK, where women gravitated to subject groups and avoided inter-country ones, female MPs in Canada were more active than their male colleagues in nearly all forms APG activity, with the only exception being chair posts in the unrecognized inter-country groups. There also was no relationship among Canadian MPs between APG participation and either margin of victory or shadow cabinet positions held. This finding regarding shadow cabinet positions is particularly surprising given the strong partisan tensions at the Canadian Parliament throughout the period studied, which presumably would make government parliamentarians less comfortable collaborating with opposition critics (as shadow ministers are known in Ottawa). However, several parliamentarians appear to have been recruited to sit on the executive of APGs precisely because they were their party’s critics on given issues, and so were seen to have a greater interest in the topic. This reality reflects the limited scope of APG activity in Canada, which, as noted previously, are generally less likely to engage in policy advocacy.
Table 7.5 – Regression analyses of factors shaping Canadian MPs’ participation in APGs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recognized inter-country groups</th>
<th>Chair posts in unrecognized inter-country groups</th>
<th>Subject groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memberships</td>
<td>Coef. (SE)</td>
<td>Memberships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coef. (SE)</td>
<td>Executive posts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ln of margin of victory</td>
<td>0.0323 (0.0319)</td>
<td>-0.0649 (0.0877)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First term</td>
<td>-0.1574** (0.0774)</td>
<td>-0.2328 (0.2229)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.1445* (0.0808)</td>
<td>0.2375 (0.2473)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cons</td>
<td>0.1487 (0.1075)</td>
<td>1.4392**** (0.4029)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>0.1742 (0.1175)</td>
<td>1.3130*** (0.4157)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>-0.4032*** (0.1432)</td>
<td>0.4106 (0.4792)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>-1.3460**** (0.1825)</td>
<td>-1.9202**** (0.5137)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Cabinet</td>
<td>-0.0411 (0.0974)</td>
<td>-0.0224 (0.2422)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>1.1361 (0.1444)</td>
<td>-2.9012 (0.5087)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of obs.</td>
<td>1216 (1.444)</td>
<td>1217 (1.997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of MPs</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log pseudo-likelihood</td>
<td>-2734.99 (0.1825)</td>
<td>-458.797 (0.5137)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ln(alpha)</td>
<td>0.2843 (0.0607)</td>
<td>0.9284 (0.2849)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpha</td>
<td>1.3288 (0.0807)</td>
<td>2.5305 (0.7209)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log likelihood</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio Chi2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R²</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Negative binomial regressions with robust variance estimators were used to analyze three dependent variables: memberships and executive posts in officially recognized inter-country groups, and chair posts in unrecognized inter-country groups. Poisson regressions were used to analyze memberships and executive posts in subject APGs.
Despite some apparent trends in the figures in Table 7.4, the regression results also reveal that partisan affiliations have much less impact on APG participation in Canada than in Britain, and the effects are limited largely to involvement in inter-country groups. In addition to the differing levels of involvement in the recognized inter-country groups noted above, Conservative and Liberal MPs were also more likely to serve as the chairs of unrecognized inter-country groups. This latter trend appears to reflect the greater interest in parliamentary diplomacy among Liberal MPs, and the greater likelihood of government MPs to serve as APG chairs. The only relationship between party affiliation and participation in subject groups evident in the regression results was that NDP MPs were less likely to be executive members, and even that finding was significant only at P=0.1. However, the subject group data cover only a single parliamentary session, and so it is possible that further trends might be evident over time.

Some partial similarities with the UK can be seen in the fact that cabinet members and first-term MPs in Canada had significantly less involvement in nearly all types of APG activities. Curiously, the only exception was for first-term MPs in unrecognized inter-country groups, which may reflect the tendency of new MPs to found inter-country groups related to their own national or cultural backgrounds. However, the Canadian results do not show the same differences in the factors that shape participation in inter-country and subject groups that was seen in the UK. In particular, there were no instances where an element that increased participation in one type of APG reduced it in the other.

### 3.4.3 Scotland

The data on APG participation at the Scottish Parliament, summarized in Tables 7.6 and 7.7, are the most comprehensive of the three jurisdictions studied, with both executive and membership information available for each session since the Parliament’s creation. The figures on rates of APG participation in the bottom two rows reveal 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 is consistent with the decline in the average number of members per group noted in Chapter 5.
### Table 7.6 – Variation in the average number of APG *executive posts* held by Members of the Scottish Parliament, by group type, demographic, party, and career factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average executive posts in inter-country APGs</th>
<th>Average executive posts in subject APGs</th>
<th>Average executive posts in all APGs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constituency</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returning</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-term</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Con</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lib Dem</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNP</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Cabinet</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total posts</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong># MSPs holding</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% of MSPs holding</strong></td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As with Westminster, the proportion of MSPs holding memberships in APGs rose slightly throughout the period studied, although they remain well behind those in the UK for both executive posts (66 versus 82 percent) and general memberships (81 versus 96 percent). This gap in APG activity is explained by the tougher restrictions on APG participation among ministers in Scotland, with the Scottish Executive’s *Ministerial Code* stipulating that ministers cannot be APG members, and should resign from any groups to which they belong upon appointment (Morris et al., 2004). Indeed, 21 of the 23 MSPs not holding any APG memberships in 2014 were ministers, while one of the others was the Presiding Officer.\(^{51}\) Therefore the Scottish Parliament had the highest level of APG participation of any of the cases in terms of uptake among *eligible* members.

---

\(^{51}\) The Scottish Parliament had one vacant seat in 2014.
Table 7.7 – Variation in the average number of APG memberships by held Members of the Scottish Parliament, by group type, demographic, party, and career factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average memberships in inter-country APGs</th>
<th>Average memberships in subject APGs</th>
<th>Average memberships in all APGs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>0.12 0.45 0.88 1.10</td>
<td>6.05 5.62 5.69 5.78</td>
<td>6.17 6.07 6.57 6.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constituency</td>
<td>0.08 0.38 0.85 0.92</td>
<td>4.99 4.75 5.01 4.38</td>
<td>5.07 5.13 5.86 5.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>0.16 0.54 0.93 1.34</td>
<td>7.45 6.72 6.57 7.59</td>
<td>7.61 7.26 7.50 8.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returning</td>
<td>N/A 0.43 0.85 1.03</td>
<td>N/A 5.15 5.45 5.49</td>
<td>N/A 5.58 6.29 6.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-term</td>
<td>N/A 0.52 0.95 1.21</td>
<td>N/A 7.10 6.16 6.21</td>
<td>N/A 7.61 7.11 7.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0.12 0.39 0.89 1.08</td>
<td>5.02 4.89 5.58 5.20</td>
<td>5.15 5.28 6.48 6.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.10 0.54 0.87 1.13</td>
<td>7.79 6.78 5.89 6.84</td>
<td>7.90 7.32 6.76 7.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Con</td>
<td>0.11 0.29 0.41 1.53</td>
<td>7.74 6.29 6.24 6.60</td>
<td>7.84 6.59 6.65 8.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>0.07 0.38 1.20 1.37</td>
<td>4.78 4.38 7.00 7.34</td>
<td>4.85 4.76 8.20 8.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lib Dem</td>
<td>0.06 0.24 1.06 1.80</td>
<td>5.94 4.65 6.06 10.80</td>
<td>6.00 4.88 7.13 12.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNP</td>
<td>0.18 0.38 0.60 0.79</td>
<td>6.18 5.31 3.38 3.98</td>
<td>6.36 5.69 3.98 4.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>0.00 1.00 2.50 0.50</td>
<td>28.00 12.57 22.00 14.50</td>
<td>28.00 13.57 24.50 15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister</td>
<td>0.00 0.06 0.19 0.00</td>
<td>0.15 0.78 0.25 0.00</td>
<td>0.15 0.83 0.44 0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Cabinet</td>
<td>0.18 0.21 0.79 1.35</td>
<td>5.41 4.64 5.29 7.29</td>
<td>5.59 4.86 6.07 8.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total posts</td>
<td>15 58 114 141</td>
<td>781 725 734 740</td>
<td>796 783 848 881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># MSPs holding</td>
<td>15 40 71 68</td>
<td>102 107 108 104</td>
<td>102 107 111 105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of MSPs holding</td>
<td>12% 31% 55% 53%</td>
<td>79% 83% 84% 81%</td>
<td>79% 83% 86% 81%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In keeping with the trend from the British Parliament, the proportion of MSPs involved with inter-country APGs stagnated in the most recent parliamentary session despite continued growth in the number of groups in operation. This pattern suggests that only a limited portion of parliamentarians in each assembly have an interest in such inter-country activity. However, the low number of inter-country groups in the Scottish Parliament’s first two sessions prevents a longitudinal analysis of the factors shaping such participation.

Looking at the relationship between MSP characteristics and APG participation, the most surprising trend in Tables 7.6 and 7.7 is that regional MSPs were more involved in APGs than their constituency counterparts in all instances. This uniformity is unexpected given that the party composition of regional MSPs changed significantly from session to session. The regression results in Table 7.8 indicate that the relationships are statistically significant, although the link between regional status and executive posts only met the P=0.1 threshold.
Table 7.8 – Negative binomial regression analyses of factors shaping MSPs’ participation in APGs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All MSPs</th>
<th>Constituency MSPs</th>
<th>Regional MSPs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional Member</td>
<td>0.1870**</td>
<td>0.1872*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0800)</td>
<td>(0.1094)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ln margin of Victory</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.0423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0451)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional vote share</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Term</td>
<td>0.0309</td>
<td>0.0542</td>
<td>0.1539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0741)</td>
<td>(0.1079)</td>
<td>(0.1236)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.1720**</td>
<td>0.1353</td>
<td>0.3252****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0749)</td>
<td>(0.1035)</td>
<td>(0.1062)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>-0.0054</td>
<td>-0.3629****</td>
<td>-0.0642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0932)</td>
<td>(0.1239)</td>
<td>(0.1445)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNP</td>
<td>-0.2702***</td>
<td>-0.4128****</td>
<td>-0.2763*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0903)</td>
<td>(0.1185)</td>
<td>(0.1458)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.4347)</td>
<td>(0.9937)</td>
<td>(0.4936)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow cabinet</td>
<td>-0.1217</td>
<td>-0.2560*</td>
<td>0.1168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.1218)</td>
<td>(0.1535)</td>
<td>(0.1528)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>1.9410****</td>
<td>0.7861****</td>
<td>1.9519****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0862)</td>
<td>(0.1098)</td>
<td>(0.1529)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of obs.</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of MPs</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log pseudo-likelihood</td>
<td>-1005.36</td>
<td>-603.735</td>
<td>-519.316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ln(alpha)</td>
<td>-1.1831</td>
<td>-1.2227</td>
<td>-1.2834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.1434)</td>
<td>(0.2241)</td>
<td>(0.2252)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpha</td>
<td>0.3063</td>
<td>0.2944</td>
<td>0.2771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0439)</td>
<td>(0.0660)</td>
<td>(0.0624)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Conservatives excluded because the majority of their members have been regional. LDs excluded because they had just 5 members in 2011.

Determining the cause of these differences between constituency and regional MSPs is challenging. At first glance, this higher rate of APG activity among regional member could be seen to reflect the greater number of MSPs from the smaller parties, such as the Greens and Liberal Democrats, who are elected through that mechanism. Yet a closer review of the data revealed that regional members from the major parties are also consistently more active in APG activities than their colleagues holding constituency seats – a reality which suggests that the
patterns of participation may result from the different situations and incentives faced by each type of MSP.

In their efforts to account for the presence of APGs in different legislatures, Ringe et al. predict that APGs would be most common in jurisdictions that use either SMP or modified proportional electoral systems, as these systems give parliamentarians greater “incentives to signal policy preferences and priorities to constituents” (2013). The greater APG involvement among regional MSPs would appear to contradict this view, as they should theoretically have less capacity to signal to voters. This situation is complicated, though, by the reality that many MSPs elected from regional lists also compete in constituency elections as well. Past studies have found that regional MSPs who seek to win constituencies seat at the next election will often attempt to “shadow” or compete with the incumbent MSP in the provision of services to constituents, at times leading to conflict (Lundberg, 2014). As such, some regional MSPs may theoretically have just as much incentive to signal to constituents through their participation in APGs. Indeed, one former regional MSP who eventually won a constituency seat was quite forthright regarding this trend, stating, “I’ve always behaved like a constituency one. I shadowed [the former constituency MSP] to his death – his political death… I do a lot of extra things” (confidential interview, December 2012). However, a review of the data found that those regional MSPs who had also competed for a constituency seat in the 2011 election had almost exactly the same average number of APG memberships in 2014 as those who had competed solely at the regional level (9.28 versus 9.24), indicating that the gap between regional and constituency members was not the result of such shadowing behaviour.

Another potential explanation comes from the finding that regional MSPs tend to be approached by a greater number of interest groups given the wider geographic areas they cover (Lundberg, 2006). The higher level of APG participation among regional MSPs may therefore reflect something of a division of labour, with constituency MSPs focusing on engaging with constituents, while regional MSPs focus on engaging with interest groups via the medium of APGs, which tend to be forums for such exchanges. In the interviews, MSPs of both types reported that the difference reflected the greater volume of correspondence and casework face by constituency members, which reduced the time available for APG activity.
As with Canada and the UK, the data in Tables 7.6 and 7.7 also suggest a gender dimension to APG involvement in Scotland, with women having a higher than average number of memberships or executive posts in all but three columns. However, the regression results indicate that the relationship between gender and APG involvement is only significant for general memberships, not executive posts. It also is only found at the constituency level when MSPs are disaggregated by electoral method. Nonetheless, the presence of statistically significant relationships between gender and APG activity in all three jurisdictions is an important finding, and one that suggests that women politicians may be more likely to engage in the kind of collaborative approach to politics embodied in APGs.

Beyond electoral method and gender, few other factors had a significant impact on APG participation in Scotland. While first-term MSPs had higher than average numbers of membership and executive posts, the relationships did not stand up in the regression analyses. Margin of victory also had no significant connection to group participation, and the reduced activity evident among shadow cabinet members was primarily confined to regional members. 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 which likely reflects the need for APGs to have a member from each party to register. As with the Conservative and Labour parties at Westminster, Scottish parties also had lower average rates of participation when in government.

Unfortunately, the low numbers of Liberal Democrats and Greens prevented the addition of control variables for these parties in the regression analyses. The Conservatives were also excluded as the vast majority of their members were elected at the regional level. As a result the dummy variables for Labour and SNP reveal that MSPs from these parties are less active in APG than those from smaller parties. However, the effect is much greater and more consistent for SNP members. While Labour MSPs were less likely to serve on group executives, the effect was concentrated among constituency MSPs, and there was no significant relationship between Labour affiliation and group membership. By contrast, SNP members were less likely to be engaged as both members and officers, and the relationship was evident among both

52 The 2003 data were excluded from the regression analyses given that all MSPs were in their first term in that session.
constituency and regional members. This reduced APG involvement by SNP parliamentarians would appear to reflect the greater tensions that exist between them and the MSPs from other parties.

4 Motivations for participation

The analyses above show that certain parliamentarians are predisposed to participation in APGs as a result of their personal characteristics or their political performance. Yet such associations do not actually indicate what motivated parliamentarians to become involved in APGs, let alone why they chose to join a group on one topic rather than another. Some relationships are certainly probable, with electorally vulnerable legislators presumably being more likely to join those subject APGs that relate to politically salient characteristics of their constituencies, such as those for a major industry or a particular demographic group. However, it is less clear why longer-serving parliamentarians would choose to become more involved in APGs as compared to those in their first terms. There also is the question of the level of engagement, and whether the motivations that prompt parliamentarians to join APGs are the same as those that lead them to take on executive positions.

The remainder of the chapter examines the actual membership composition of various APGs, the behaviour of individual parliamentarians, and the insights gleaned from the interview respondents to explore what motivates parliamentarians to participate in APGs, and how such motivations relate to the factors identified in the quantitative analysis.

4.1 Electoral incentives and constituency connections

As with those in other jurisdictions, parliamentarians in each legislature reported joining APGs to engage with their constituents and respond to their concerns. Constituency dynamics are most obviously visible in those APGs that specifically seek to advance the interests of a defined region, such as the UK’s APPG on Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire or the Trent Severn Caucus at the Ontario Legislature and the Canadian Parliament. However, constituency effects are also the primary drivers of participation in those APGs for specific industries as well. This trend was noted by a British MP, who described industry-focused groups as offering a number of benefits for parliamentarians:
With business ones, it’s usually because there is a constituency interest. So some major employer or group of employers, there’s a cluster businesses in a particular industry. It’s useful way for the MP in political terms to demonstrate to those employers that you understand where they’re coming from, what their challenges are. But at the same time, it’s a great avenue for you, a conduit for some of that knowledge to come in so that you can understand what it is that’s keeping those jobs in your constituency, what is creating the climate that brought them there, and what you can do to try to ensure that they stay there. Because especially in the climate at the moment, you want to keep those jobs there (confidential interview, November 2012).

An MSP expressed a very similar view when explaining why she had joined an industry group, stating “My involvement in that is that the... industry is a very important industry for [my constituency] and so it’s important that I’m there to hear the views of the industry, what’s going right and what’s going wrong.” Likewise, when asked which groups she belong to and why, one Canadian MP simply replied, “So there was an all-party shipbuilding caucus... I was part of it because shipbuilding is part of my riding” (confidential interview, April 2013). Indeed at the Canadian Parliament, the geographic distribution of an industry across constituencies may affect whether a caucus is formed on an all-party or intra-party basis. One respondent argued that the decision to form an intra-party Conservative Wine Caucus reflected the fact that the vast majority of constituencies with wineries were represented by Conservative MPs. A similar dynamic was also likely behind the intra-party Conservative Grains and Oilseeds Caucus.

Constituency connections can also lead parliamentarians to create groups focused on non-economic issues as well. In the UK, one MP joined the APPG for the Hillsborough Disaster “because I have constituents who died at Hillsborough” (confidential interview, November 2012). Similarly the APPG on British Hindus was founded by MP Bob Blackman, whose Harrow East constituency is home to a large Hindu community (“All Party Parliamentary Group for British Hindus formed,” 2013). In Canada, it was not surprising that MP Chris Warkentin would become the founding Co-Chair of the Aboriginal Friendship Centres All-Party Caucus given that his riding of Peace River is home to three of the institutions. Along the same lines, the Parliamentary Border Caucus was founded by Conservative MP Russ Heibert, whose riding of South Surrey – White Rock – Cloverdale includes one of the country’s busiest border crossings. Even Conservative MP Scott Armstrong’s position as chair of the Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament reflects the fact that his constituency includes the town of Pugwash, which for over 50 years has hosted international meetings on the subject. Constituency
links are also evident in the CPGs on the Scots Language and Gaelic at Holyrood, which are dominated by MSPs from areas in the country where the languages are spoken.

The Canadian MPs interviewed also indicated that inter-country APGs can be useful for connecting with the voters in their constituencies who have a personal or family connection to other jurisdictions. A case in point is the Canada-Portugal Parliamentary Friendship Group, which was refounded after several years of inactivity on the initiative of Andrew Cash, the NDP MP for the Little Portugal neighbourhood of Toronto. For a number of years the Canada-Greece Parliamentary Friendship Group was chaired by Liberal MP Raymond Folco, who represented a Montreal riding with a sizeable Greek population (Muise, 2011). Conservative MP Rod Bruinooge, whose Winnipeg constituency is home to a large Filipino community, has similarly chaired the Canada-Philippines Parliamentary Group (Raphael, 2009). Other Winnipeg MPs are also heavily involved. One MP even mentioned warning colleagues not to become involved in inter-country groups unless they had a constituency connection: “But I always encourage caution about getting involved. Unless you have a community in your riding. For example, in Winnipeg there is a large, large Filipino population. So you should be a member of the Canada – Philippines group. Absolutely you should” (confidential interview, December 2013).

In addition to signalling to specific politically engaged stakeholder groups within the constituencies they represent, parliamentarians also need to generate regular content for newsletters, websites, and social media posts that presents them as defending the interests of their communities. Involvement in both types of APGs can provide an effective way for MPs to appear active and influential on various subjects, and parliamentarians frequently mention APG activities in their constituency communications. For instance, the website for NDP MP Paul Dewar highlighted his efforts to drive the creation of an APG for the arts and cultural sector – an important local issue given the many artistic institutions housed in his constituency, including Canada’s National Arts Centre (Dewar, 2009). Likewise Conservative MP Garry Breitkreuz, who represented the large, rural riding of Yorkon-Melville, had an extensive section on his webpage regarding his work as founder and Chair of the All-Party Outdoors Caucus (Breitkreuz, 2015).

53 Yorkton-Melville is more than twice as large as Wales, but has fewer than 80,000 inhabitants.
In keeping with the greater presence of British APGs on twitter, MPs at Westminster are more likely than those in the other jurisdictions to tweet about their APG activities as a way to engage constituents. One of the most prolific was Liberal Democrat MP Julian Huppert, who tweeted 97 times regarding his involvement in APGs during the 2010-2015 parliamentary session. While many of the groups he mentioned, such as the APGs for Cycling, the Life Sciences, and Medical Research, were obviously important to those in his Cambridge constituency, in several instances he also specifically highlighted the local connection:

Now at APPG on Universities. Very relevant for the three in Cambridge (6 July 2010)

At a meeting of the APPG on dance, celebrating the Dance and Drama Awards, which support students at Cambridge Performing Arts, at Bodywork. (22 June 2011)

At AGM of all-party Save the Pub Group. @camcitco #libdem Cllr Tim Ward speaking about Cambridge pub protection policy @CAMRA_official #fb (5 March 2013)

At APPG on Students, of which I'm Secretary, ahead of our event on getting students registered to vote. @CUSUonline @AngliaRuskinSU #fb (3 November 2014)

At key meeting of East West Rail Consortium. I'm Vice-Chair of APPG for EW rail; about to speak about why we need Cambridge link #fb (10 November 2014)

This is not to say that legislators in the other jurisdictions do not take to social media regarding their involvement in APGs as well. Indeed even at Queen’s Park, a number of MPPs have taken to twitter to highlight their participation in the All-Party Cycling Caucus (Harris, 2016; Mantha, 2015; McMahon, 2016).

Although producing content for websites, newsletters, and social media is useful, direct media coverage can be even more valuable to MPs since it provides publicity for which parliamentarians would otherwise have to pay. Much of this reporting on parliamentarians’ APG activities comes from local media outlets, which often is easier to obtain than national media coverage, and also more useful for electoral purposes. In Britain, this role of local media in

\[54\] Search conducted using Twitter’s advanced search tool for the key words “APPG” and “All Party.” The 97 tweets included some regarding unregistered APGs, such as the All Party Commission on Physical Activity.
highlighting MPs’ involvement with APGs can be clearly seen in the “MPs in Pubs” initiative by the APPG on Beer and the All-Party Save the Pub Group, described in Chapter 4, which attracted local news coverage for the MPs who participated.\textsuperscript{55} Local papers in the UK also regularly publish stories when area MPs are elected to executive positions within APGs, such as the Grimsby Telegraph’s coverage of Cleethorpes MP Martin Vickers’ selection as vice-chair of the APPG on Regional Airports (Wheeler, 2014). In the piece Vickers highlighted the role of such airports, including the local Humberside Airport, in driving regional economies and stressed the need to defend their interests:

Humberside Airport is a great asset to northern Lincolnshire and the Humber more widely… we are going to expand the industries in northern Lincolnshire, as we are hoping to do with the renewables industry, and already having the oil refineries – many of which have American headquarters – it is vital that we have international connections… That’s why we have itemised a number of issues that we can campaign on to enhance the role of our regional airports, for example around the issue of Air Passenger Duty.

In many cases smaller newspapers and online media outlets will largely, if not entirely, base their articles on the press releases regarding APG activities issued by MPs’ offices. A particularly glaring example was when the website BayToday.ca directly reprinted a news release (including the words “News Release”) from North Bay MP Jay Aspin, chair of the Canadian All-Party Aerospace Caucus, announcing that he would hold a two-day forum regarding the aerospace industry in his constituency (Aspin, 2013). The Lancashire Telegraph was somewhat more subtle with its coverage of Conservative MP Andrew Stephenson’s election as vice-chair of the Westminster APPG on Aerospace, changing the first line of Stephenson’s press release from “On Wednesday 8th January Pendle’s MP, Andrew Stephenson, was elected as a Vice Chairman of the Aerospace All Party Parliamentary Group” to “Pendle MP Andrew Stephenson has been elected as a Vice Chairman of the Aerospace All Party Parliamentary Group” (“Pendle MP lands role on aerospace parliamentary group,” 2014; Stephenson, 2014). However, the rest of the press release was reproduced in its entirety. Both Aspin and Stephenson have significant aerospace industries in their respective ridings, and the articles allowed the parliamentarians to have nearly unfiltered access to a broader audience. Some parliamentarians may also have weekly columns in their local papers that give them an opportunity to promote their work with APGs. A case in

\textsuperscript{55} It is fairly safe to say that the closing of local pubs is an issue of concern in constituencies across the UK.
point is Conservative MP Barry Devolin, who used such a column to announce the creation of the *Trent-Severn Caucus* (Devolin, 2008).

Curiously, one first-term Conservative MP at Westminster also reported that his involvement in APGs was not just useful for gaining local media attention on particular policy issues, but also as a way to signal his willingness to be independent from his party. As he stated:

> I think it’s changed. I think the public actually prefer it when you’re seen to be working cross party. I mean bipartisanship and all that stuff as the Americans would call it is really popular. So one of the things that I get a lot of is being independently minded is a good thing, so being not too hot to the whips, but also being prepared to work across party. And a lot of constituents say to me, I like the fact that you work, you do a lot of cross party campaigns… People like that kind of parties working together. So then the APPGs are good because I get a lot – obviously you use it for local publicity as well. So I got a lot of local publicity for the [APPG inquiry], it’s a nice issue that nobody’s against… And I was able to say, “Here I am chairing this cross party inquiry. We have buy-in from all sides.” So I do the publicity I just look like a nice guy who’s working with everybody to achieve something that we all agree on. And that goes down pretty well (confidential interview, November 2012).

In addition to content for media and constituency communications, involvement with APGs can also provide parliamentarians with reasons to hold events in their constituencies. In the same vein as MP Jay Aspin’s aerospace forum, the British *APPG on Manufacturing* hosted a series of events on “Manufacturing Growth in the Regions” in different cities around the country involving the MPs for those areas. Similar events can also occur on social issues as well, as when NDP MP Chris Charlton, the NDP Co-Chair for the *Anti-Poverty Caucus*, hosted a consultation in her riding on the state of poverty in Hamilton, a city that has struggled with the issue (Carter, 2013). Holding these events allows MPs to appear as leaders on the issues addressed by the groups and to give their constituents the feeling of being connected to the policy process.

However, while this use of APG activity to generate media attention and content for constituency communications is clearly evident in Canada and the UK, the trend does not extend to Scotland, with MSPs being much less likely to highlight their APG activities on their personal websites or to seek media coverage for their activities. Once again, this trend would appear to reflect the role of Scottish APGs as forums for discussions among stakeholders rather than as campaigning bodies. Indeed, this view was directly expressed by the convenor of one of the larger health groups when asked whether he highlighted his work in the group in newsletters to constituents:
It could do, but I don’t tend to use it… I get asked to sponsor things… [but] none of that actually amounts to very much in terms of promoting myself… People don’t tend to give a quote as the Convener. Because if you’re speaking as the Convener you have to be speaking for the group. So you can’t really in that sense promote yourself and just attach that title to something you’re saying (confidential interview, December 2012).

Another similarly noted that the APGs in Scotland were not used for the kind of campaigning that could resonate in a constituency at the electoral level

I’ve got campaigns going in my constituency obviously on a number of issues, but I’ve never used it for… I’ve never involved it in a cross-party group. I have used it in the Petitions Committee. We have got these campaigns through to the Petitions Committee but not to a cross-party group (confidential interview, December 2012).

However, each MSP’s APG memberships are listed on their official biographies on the Scottish Parliament’s webpage, providing some signalling function to potential voters or stakeholders.

4.2 Personal interest

In keeping with the findings from Hammond (1998) and Ringe et al. (2013), personal interests are a major force driving APG participation by many parliamentarians. Indeed, many of the issues addressed by APGs, such as cancer or climate change, are not tied to any given constituency, and far more inter-country APGs exist than can be explained by the number expatriate communities in each jurisdiction. Instead, parliamentarians often join such bodies based solely on their interest in the subject or partner jurisdiction. One British MP was quite up front in this regard, and when asked what motivated his participation in different APGs he replied, “I have a number of interests that have no relevance whatsoever to my constituents…. It’s a representative democracy at the end of the day. I don’t necessarily always reflect the views of my constituents. The line I take is that if they don’t like that then they have an opportunity every 4 or 5 years to kick me out” (confidential interview, May 2013).

The role of personal interests are perhaps most clear for those APGs that deal with matters of personal conscience, such as abortion. While some may claim to be representing the views of their constituents, parliamentarians are likely to have voters on each side of such issues, and the vast majority of parliamentarians would be unlikely to associate themselves with an APG whose objectives they disagreed with. Matters of conscience can also fuel participation in APGs that
might initially appear unconnected to the outside observer. For instance the Canadian Parliamentary Committee for Palliative and Compassionate Care was founded by a small group of parliamentarians who believed that the provision of enhanced palliative care services would help to reduce demand for euthanasia (confidential interview, March 2013). Specifically, the MPs launched the initiative to offer an alternative to assisted suicide following the defeat of a private member’s bill that would have legalized the practice (Echlin, 2010). However, the group also attracted a range of other parliamentarians who were interested in palliative care on other grounds.

Beyond matters of conscience, parliamentarians may join APGs for a wide range of personal reasons. Involvement in health APGs appears to be particularly motivated by parliamentarians’ personal experience with different conditions. The chair of the UK’s APPG on Autism, Conservative MP Robert Buckland, has a daughter with the condition, while Conservative MP Charles Walker, chair of the APPG on Mental Health, has been quite open about his own struggles with obsessive compulsive disorder (“Autism debate,” 2012; Mulholland, 2013). At Holyrood, SNP MSP Dennis Robertson, who is himself blind, is deputy-convenor of the CPG on Visual Impairment. In Ontario, one respondent noted that Liberal MPP David Levac’s passionate support of the Lung Health Caucus is motivated by his father’s death from an asthma attack (confidential interview, May 2014). A particularly clear case of personal motivation for APG participation can also be found in Liberal MPP Eleanor McMahon’s involvement in Ontario’s All-Party Cycling Caucus. Ms. McMahon’s husband was tragically killed in a cycling accident, prompting her to found the “Share the Road Coalition,” a charity that promoted cycling safety. As part of its government relations efforts, the charity sponsored the creation of the Cycling Caucus. Ms. McMahon then ran for election to the legislature, and joined the caucus after winning her seat in the legislature.

The impact of personal interests is also evident among those parliamentarians who join groups related to their previous professional experience. In Canada, Liberal MP Kirsty Duncan, a former climate change scientist, pushed for the creation of the All-Party Climate Change Caucus (De Souza, 2011). The main instigator behind the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity was also former Liberal Senator Romeo Dallaire, who had commanded the UN peacekeeping force in Rwanda during that country’s genocide. The APPG on Universities at Westminster was co-chaired by Lord Norton of Louth
and MP Roberta Blackman-Wood, both of whom are university professors, while the chair of the *APPG on Insurance and Financial Services*, Conservative MP Jonathan Evans, had worked for a number of major insurance companies. SNP MSP Jim Eadie, chair of the *CPG on Life Sciences* at the Scottish Parliament, similarly is a former head of the Scottish Branch of the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry. Parliamentarians who previously worked as physicians also tend to be disproportionately involved in APGs related to health care. Professional experience can also motivate participation in geographic groups as well. Conservative Senator Raynell Andreychuk, a former Canadian ambassador to Kenya, helped to establish the *Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association*. Likewise, Conservative MP John Weston, who lived for several years in Taiwan, went on to chair the *Canada-Taiwan Parliamentary Friendship Group* (Terry Fox Research Institute, 2014).

As described in the discussion of APG formation in Chapter Six, many parliamentarians also become involved in inter-country groups that reflect their personal heritage. NDP MP Peter Stoffer, who was born in the Netherlands, led the initial organizing for the *Canada-Netherlands Parliamentary Friendship Group* and later served as chair. The UK’s *APPG on Poland* was similarly chaired by Polish-born Conservative MP Daniel Kawczynski, while Labour MP Mark Lazarowicz, who is of Polish descent, served as the group’s vice-chair. MP Chris Ruane, who is of Irish heritage, chaired the *APPG on the Irish in Britain*. At Holyrood, the French-born MSP Christian Allard chaired the *CPG on France*.

In many cases parliamentarians’ personal and constituency motivations overlap given that they often have a genuine concern for the important issues in the communities they represent. This sentiment was clearly expressed by one MSP when asked how he decided which APGs to join:

> Just because I’m interested in them. The likes of the [industrial sector] group – [the industry] is a very important issue for my constituency, and the [cultural issue 1] and the [cultural issue 2] are both [issues] that I’m very interested in as well. I was brought-up [with cultural issue 1] and I’ve learned quite a bit about [cultural issue 2] as well, and so I’m keen to support those [issues]. So it’s just things that I have a personal interest in. But [cultural issue 1] is also really important to my constituency, so it’s a mixture of constituency and personal interests (confidential interview, December 2012).

Another MSP agreed:
I suppose it’s really your own individual interests and passions. There are issues that you think are of relevance and to your constituents, so this would give you a profile of the people that you represent locally. Because I’m a constituency member… so your own personal interests and passions in the constituency and then if there are any particular policy issues that you are interested in. In my case my interests and involvement in cross-party groups spans each of those motivating factors (confidential interview, December 2012).

The same trend could be seen in Canada and the UK as well. As one Canadian MP put it when asked why he joined the Parliamentary Outdoors Caucus, “My involvement of course is because I'm from a rural region… And being quite active in fishing and hunting myself personally, there's another reason to be involved because I want to make sure that we as Canadians, from a non-partisan point of view, can ensure that we can continue to hunt and fish and harvest” (confidential interview, December 2013).

As with those who join based on constituency concerns, parliamentarians in Canada, the UK, and Ontario who take part in APGs based on personal interest may also use their involvement in communications with constituents or as a way to obtain media exposure. For instance, several members of the Canadian Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care held town hall consultations on palliative care with citizens and civil society groups in their communities. The groups’ co-chairs, Conservative MP Harold Albrecht, NDP MP Joe Comartin, and Liberal MP Frank Valeriote also attracted local media coverage for their work with the committee (e.g. Cross, 2010; Shuttleworth, 2011; Swayze, 2010). NDP MP Carol Hughes, a member of the group, also highlighted the committee’s work in her regular column in her local newspaper, arguing that “The committee is an example of how parliament can work and how MPs can reach across party lines to find common ground” (Hughes, 2011). Parliamentarians involved with the British APPG on Financial Education for Young People have similarly received extensive local media coverage for their work with the group, including another piece in the Lancashire Telegraph that largely reproduced a press release from Pendle MP Andrew Stephenson (“Plans to include financial education in curriculum welcomed by Pendle MP,” 2013)

However, parliamentarians are also aware that pursuing APG activities based on their personal interests may actually detract from their electoral success. In particular, time spent on personal interests could take away from that available to campaign on local issues. This tension was made
clear by one British MP as she described the different factors motivating her participation on the executive of two APGs:

And for me that APPG [on the health issue] is highlighting issues that I actually care about and I want to see changed. Now you could say the same about [economic issue], although it’s on sort of a different level. The [economic issue] one is something that, you know does it bother me personally? No. Does it bother my constituents? Yes. And that is very much driven by my constituency base…

And so whilst – do I think that [health issue] is a burning electoral issue in my constituency? No, I don’t. Is it something that I personally care about? Yes. Is it worth the investment of half a day a week? No. No. That is half a day week I could more effectively spend writing to my constituents about [the economic issue]. [The APPG on the economic issue], that will be of electoral benefit (confidential interview, November 2012).

It is also possible that parliamentarians may be interested in issues that may be uncomfortable for their constituents or otherwise evoke a negative reaction. When asked if she had joined a health-related APG in hopes that it would contribute to her chances of reelection, another British MP replied “Why do you think [that issue] is going to get me reelected? Most people in my constituency would rather I wasn’t talking about [it] because it reminds everybody [of a problem in the constituency]… really they would rather I was talking about the Department of Work and Pensions” (confidential interview, October 2012). A Canadian MP expressed a parallel viewpoint when asked if he mentioned his involvement in officially recognized inter-country groups to his constituents: “Probably the worst thing I could do in [my constituency] is to tell people that I am in a foreign country on their dime” (confidential interview, December 2013). Recognizing involvement in the group could harm MPs’ electoral chances, the Canadian Parliamentary Pro-Life Caucus has even adopted a policy of membership confidentiality under which individual parliamentarians can identify themselves as belonging to the group, but are barred from revealing who else attends the meetings (confidential interview, March 2013).

4.3 Parliamentary responsibilities

Beyond constituency and personal interests, parliamentarians also tend to become members of those APGs that relate to their parliamentary duties, such as committee assignments. For instance, members of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade at the Canadian Parliament tend to be very active in inter-country APGs. Likewise, those on the Standing Committee on National Defence are frequently members of the
Canada-NATO Parliamentary Association. In the UK, Labour MP Andrew Miller served as both the chair of the Select Committee on Science and Technology while simultaneously chairing the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee, an APG. At Holyrood, Conservative MSP Murdo Fraser was both convener of the Scottish Parliament’s committee on Economy, Energy, and Tourism and co-convenor of the CPG on the Scottish Economy.

Several of the parliamentarians interviewed in Canada, the UK, and Scotland specifically noted that the information acquired from an APG had been helpful for their work on a formal committee. This kind of information gathering reflects that observed by Ringe et al. (2013). However, as with the overlap between personal and constituency interests, there is almost certainly some endogeneity in this relationship, with those interested in certain topics being more likely to seek membership on both the formal parliamentary committees and APGs. Moreover, such endogeneity is likely to grow stronger in the UK now that select committee members are chosen by the members of each parliamentary party rather than being appointed by the party whips.

A curious difference between the jurisdictions revealed by the quantitative results is that shadow cabinet members at Westminster are significantly less likely to be involved in APGs, while no such relationship exists in Canada and is found only unevenly in Scotland. Indeed shadow cabinet members in the latter two parliaments often hold leadership positions in the APGs related to their critic roles. In Ottawa, this overlap between critic duties and APG participation is especially evident among NDP MPs. Examples include Paul Dewar, the party’s Foreign Affairs Critic, serving as chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity, Aboriginal Affairs Critic Jean Crowder serving as the co-chair of the Friendship Centres All-Party Caucus, and Fin Donnelly, the NDP Deputy Critic for Fisheries and Oceans, serving as co-chair of the Oceans Caucus. This trend also extends to inter-country groups with Brian Masse, the NDP Critic for the Canada-US border, serving as Vice-Chair of the Canada-US Inter-parliamentary Group. One respondent indicated that in at least one case the NDP central leadership deliberately chose to put forward a critic for a senior leadership position after the party was approached by an outside lobby group for suggestions regarding APG members. In other case the critics were recruited to ensure those involved were interested in the issue.
In Scotland, shadow cabinet members from all opposition parties tend to be quite active in APGs connected to their portfolios. For instance, in September 2014 Conservative Public Health spokesperson Nanette Milne was the convenor or co-convenor of three health related groups (Asthma, Cancer, and Diabetes), deputy convenor for four others (Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Conditions; Muscular Dystrophy; Older People, Age and Ageing; and Visual Impairment) and a member of a further nine (Deafness, Dementia, Disability, Epilepsy, Heart Disease And Stroke, Life Sciences, MS, Muscular Dystrophy, Palliative Care, and Rare Diseases). Labour’s Health and Well-being spokesperson Jackie Baillie, was similarly co-convenor of the CPG on Muscular Dystrophy, convenor of the CPG on Chronic Pain and a member of 10 other health groups. Jim Hume, the Liberal Democrat Health spokesperson, was not on the executive of any health-focused APGs, but was a member of seven such groups.

When asked why such involvement by party spokespeople was accepted at Holyrood despite the greater sensitivities over partisanship in Scottish APGs, one respondent pointed to the size of the assembly. “It’s fairly normal up here,” she stated, “I suspect just because the numbers are smaller, for you to have front bench spokespeople as members of your group. And also it’s a little bit odd that Willie Rennie chairs the Tobacco Control group being that he is [Liberal Democrat] party leader. But you know, not that strange” (confidential interview, November 2012). One MSP reported that the presence of party spokespeople in leadership positions required them to take extra care to work with government MSPs so that CPGs were not viewed in a partisan light (confidential interview, November 2012).

The small number of APGs in Ontario makes it difficult to establish any clear trend regarding the extent of participation by opposition critics. However, one respondent noted that it was actually preferable to have the critics involved given that the other members of each party tend to defer to the critics on a given issue:

Whenever I brought [an] issue to anyone, they would always say – the first question a politician would say – was, “Have you spoken to our Critic?” Always. Always, always, always. Because I think that's how it's...they just divide and conquer. So if I send a letter to a politician… they would say thank you very much, I've sent it to our Critic. So getting right where the action is, is the way to go I think for sure (confidential interview, May 2014).
This approach has been extended to the government benches as well, with MPP Mike Colle initially serving as the Liberal co-chair for the All-Party Cycling Caucus despite also being the Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Transportation.

In contrast, one former shadow cabinet member at Westminster reported deliberately avoiding engagement in APGs related to her own portfolio for fear of making it too political. As she stated:

> It has to be separate. It’s not right to do both. You can’t do that… You exclude yourself from your own subject matter. I don’t know whether there are strict rules about it, actually. I don’t actually know. I’d have to go back and check. But I just think it’s the wrong thing to do. I just think personally that you shouldn’t do both at once (confidential interview, October 2012).

This view was also consistent with the accepted view at Westminster that APGs were for backbenchers, not those holding front-bench positions. However, as the quotation implies, former ministers and ministers shadow often became involved with issues that they had previously dealt with in their official roles.

Together the varying roles played by shadow cabinet members across the four legislatures helps to illustrate the impact of legislative culture in shaping the operation of APGs in different jurisdictions. In Ontario and to a lesser extent Canada, backbench members are less willing to take an individual position on policy issues separate from their own parties. As such, it can make sense for shadow cabinet members to be involved in APG activities in order to acquire information. In Scotland, the small size of the Parliament and the cross-partisan legacy of the “new politics” on which it was founded appears to make MSPs willing to accept the presence of shadow ministers within APGs. Yet at Westminster, the greater independence and separation between backbench and frontbench politicians leaves the latter nervous about joining group activities.

4.4 Pressure from external actors and colleagues

Just as outside pressure can lead to the formation of APGs, it can also prompt parliamentarians to join them as well. As one British MP put it, “There are three reasons for joining in all party group. One is that you have burning interest in it, and really care about it. The second is that it matters in policy terms in your constituency, or [third] that a group or an individual or business in the constituency has said, ‘Please will you join this group?’” (confidential interview, October
However, several of the parliamentarians interviewed also said that they had agreed to join an APG as a favour to a colleague who wanted to establish a group, or who was running for a leadership position.

External pressure can come from individual constituents or from organized lobby groups. Often the two are linked, with the advocacy groups regularly encouraging their members to ask their parliamentarians to join a particular group. For instance, the UK’s Brittle Bones Society, which campaigns for those with the condition osteogenesis imperfecta, asked its supporters to encourage their MPs to become part of the new APG that it supported:

The Brittle Bone Society is calling for support to help set up an All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on rare, genetic and undiagnosed conditions.

We ask you to use your influence and please contact your local MP (you can find out who your local MP is here [weblink]).

Then simply send a letter encouraging them to join – it will only take a few minutes to adapt the letter we have drafted for you. Find it here [weblink].

The more MPs that are actively engaged in the group, the more opportunity we have to raise awareness, influence change, and work together to improve the lives of individuals affected by rare and genetic conditions like Osteogenesis Imperfecta…

We would be interested in hearing if you get a response from your politician as this helps us to identify who has an interest in rare diseases which helps our campaign work (Brittle Bones Society, 2015).

Likewise, one of the potential actions listed in the Meeting your MP Toolkit produced by the UK’s Global Campaign for Education (2015) was to ask the MP to join the APPG on Global Education. At Holyrood, a newsletter produced by the “25 per cent ME Group,” which provided the secretariat for the CPG on ME, encouraged its members to ask their MSPs to join the group (25% ME Group, 2011). As noted in Chapters Five and Six, external stakeholders are also regularly involved in recruiting APG leaders, especially following the turnover associated with a general election. This includes in Ontario, where the Share the Road Coalition worked to recruit co-chairs from each party for the All-Party Cycling Caucus.

As discussed further in Chapter Five, pressure from colleagues was also listed as a major reason for joining APGs by many of the parliamentarians interviewed in Britain, Canada, and Scotland. In the UK, such requests were seen to flow from the requirement for new groups to have at least
20 qualifying members in order to register. The need for Scottish APGs to have least one member from each recognized party group also created a similar demand for participation by members of the smaller parties. In Canada, parliamentarians are regularly asked to join inter-country APGs in order to support a colleague’s bid for a leadership position. While such appeals are typically made to fellow party members, one respondent noted all members of each APG are usually permitted to vote for each leadership position, even if that position is reserved for a member of one specific party. As such, Canadian parliamentarians may at times reach across party lines in their campaigns to win a leadership post. Although less common, requests join an APG in order to help a colleague secure an APG leadership position were also encountered in the UK as well, although such efforts were always directed to fellow partisans.

However, while many respondents reported joining APGs in response to pressure from external actors or colleagues, members generally were only active in the groups if they dealt with issues that were relevant in their constituency, or were personally interesting to the parliamentarians themselves. The statements below are demonstrative of this trend:

And also to be honest with you, each all party group has to have 20 members. Of that membership maybe only four or five will be active. I mean we’re very good at persuading friends and acquaintances to come along and join: “We won’t ask you to do anything,” Do you see what I’m saying? “Just sign your name to give legitimacy it requires” (British MP, confidential interview, November 2012).

Well [my colleague] started the group up because it something that he is very interested in. So he started it up, and he said, “Are you going to join?” And I said yeah, it’s actually something that I think is a good idea because I had personal… problems [with the issue] when I was a student. And it just seemed to me like it was a good thing… That’s why I got involved really. I had a personal interest in it (British MP, confidential interview, November 2012).

Other MPs have asked for me to join, other Ambassadors have asked me to join. Ones that I'm interested in I signed up for. [A multilateral association] was the one that I signed up for. And now that I'm… on the executive. I say I did my time as just a member and then wanted to get involved and do more of the work because that was out of interest. My [critic] portfolios relate to [other issues], really not a whole heck of a lot to do with [the association] but it was one that I have an interest in. That's why I signed up for that (Canadian MP, confidential interview, December 2013).

I have no interest in [the subject]… And it was one of my constituents that said, “We’d like you to join this group.” I’ve been to a couple of meetings where the
agenda has been absolutely relating to my constituency but other than that I tend not to go” (MSP, confidential interview, November 2012).

I don’t even know what the CPG is called… but I was approached by a constituent who said “would you join this group,” which I did just because I was asked – although I’ve never been to a meeting (MSP, confidential interview, November 2012).

Parliamentarians face pressure to join APGs from a variety of sources, and many respond by formally signing up as members. However, legislators are much more likely to actually become involved with and serve on the executive of those groups that relate to their personal or constituency interests, with personal interests appearing to be the more powerful of the two motivations.

4.5 Influence, status, relevance, and personal enjoyment

In her study of congressional caucuses, Hammond (1998) argued that APG participation was higher among junior legislators, who used the groups as a way to build connections and demonstrate leadership potential in hopes of seeking formal positions of authority and influence within the institution. APG involvement declined as members gained seniority and moved into formal leadership positions. In contrast, Ringe et al. (2013) found the opposite trend, with participation rising with seniority.

The regression results revealed that first-term parliamentarians in Canada and the UK were significantly less likely to engage in most forms of APG activity, with participation instead being higher among MPs who had served at least one term. However, exploring these findings through the qualitative interviews was challenging given that both legislatures had experienced either a change in government (UK) or a move from minority to majority government (Canada) at the last election prior to when the interviews were conducted. As described above, such large scale influxes of new parliamentarians tend to be associated with a spike in the average level of APG participation among MPs in their first term – a trend attributed to the APG positions left open by those MPs defeated in the last election. As such it is possible that the views expressed by respondents may reflect the current state of play in each parliament rather than the longer-term trends.

Despite these caveats, those interviewed in both Ottawa and Westminster generally agreed with the findings of Ringe et al. (2013) that involvement in APGs was not a path to promotion. As one
British Conservative MP replied when asked about whether involvement in APGs could help an MP to secure an executive role, “No, not at all, not in the slightest… I would say the APG is the reserve of the backbenchers, and long-serving members on APGs are the people without political ambitions. It plays no role in promotion here at all” (confidential interview, May 2013). A Liberal Democrat MP agreed, arguing that front bench positions were granted on the basis of “blind loyalty” (confidential interview, November 2012). Respondents in Canada were similarly dismissive of any link between APG activity and promotion, with one Conservative MP stating that “the Prime Minister doesn’t know or care who is the chair of one group or another” (confidential interview, December 2013).

In Scotland, no link existed between duration of service and APG participation, but respondents still saw no link between APG involvement and promotion. Given the small size of the Parliament, nearly all members who were eligible had some involvement in APGs. As such, respondents noted that those involved in APGs tended to be promoted, but were not promoted because of that involvement.

Nevertheless, exceptions were encountered. For instance, one Canadian MP mentioned becoming involved in APGs in the hopes of making connections and building expertise:

I didn't have a [standing] committee… So that's how I got involved in [standing] committees, was learning the roles and responsibilities through the friendship groups and the [all-party] parliamentary committees. So when I did get to a [standing] committee I wasn't the “deer-in-the- headlights, going what's going on.” And I knew many of the members around the table because I had seen them in other [all-party] parliamentary committees before. So I was one of those that used that to learn, but at the same to get my name out there (confidential interview, December 2013).

Several respondents in Canada also pointed to the example of Liberal MP Bill Graham, who was heavily involved in a number of inter-country APGs and then went on to serve as Canada’s Minister of Foreign Affairs under Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and Minister of Defense under Prime Minister Paul Martin. However, Graham has also served as chair of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs prior to moving into cabinet.

In the UK, one long-serving MP noted that several of the younger MPs he had worked with in different APGs did later go on to ministerial office, and indeed a number of cases were found in the 2010-2015 Parliament where MPs who had demonstrated skill in leading APGs had later
been appointed to positions in the executive. For instance, when asked if leading an APG could help parliamentarians to secure a front-bench position, one respondent highlighted Liberal Democrat MP Jo Swinson, who was very active as the initial chair of the *APPG on Body Image* before being appointed as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment Relations, Consumer and Postal Affairs and for Women and Equalities. As he stated, “I think possibly if they take on a niche campaign and then you get well known for it. I mean… Jo Swinson I would say milked that for all it was worth in terms of publicity, and she is now minister. Particularly if they are plowing ground that no one has gone for before, yeah, it can probably raise the profile of an MP” (confidential interview, November 2012). However, another parliamentarian cautioned that Swinson, as a Liberal Democrat, was “in a much shallower pool” making it easier for her skills and competency to stand out regardless of her APG involvement. As the respondent put it, “she’s bright, she’s with the [program], she’s a woman, she was always going to go somewhere” (confidential interview, November 2012).

More surprising is the case of Conservative MP Robert Halfon, who in 2014 was appointed Parliamentary Private Secretary (PPS) to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and following the 2015 election was further promoted to serve as Minister without Portfolio and Deputy Chairman of the Conservative Party. Prior his appointment as a PPS, Halfon had lead the *APPG on Fair Fuels for Motorists and Hauliers* during its successful campaign to oppose an increase in fuel duty (“Fair Fuel UK Campaign,” 2013, “Fuel duty u-turn: Robert Halfon triumphs,” 2013). The initiative was embarrassing for the government, and Halfon used harsh language in his campaign, at one point describing the government as “crucifying hard-working businesses, motorists and families” (Hull Daily Mail, 2011). In fact, one respondent predicted that Halfon’s efforts would preclude him from promotion “Because he’s a thorn in the government’s side, and he’s put himself on a collision course with the Chancellor of the Exchequer” (confidential interview, November 2012).

Instead, Halfon’s ascent appears to have been tied to his campaigning work, with the Chancellor, George Osborne announcing the appointment with the tweet “Delighted that Robert Halfon MP is my new pps - he's a brilliant campaigner. Welcome to the team @halfon4harlowMP” (Osborne, 2014). His work on the fuel issue was also noted when he was promoted to Minister without Portfolio, and Halfon is reported to have continued campaigning on the fuel issue while serving as in the role (Dysch, 2015; Swinford, 2016). As such, this outcome could perhaps be
explained by the philosophy of keeping friends close and enemies closer. As one observer put it when discussing parliamentary rebels in general,

But every year when there is a reshuffle there are people who have previously rebelled brought back into the fold because it demonstrates that – because the party has no interest in creating... a permanently disgruntled group a backbench MPs who will vote against everything on principle. So there’s always a couple of token ones who are promoted to show that redemption is at hand (confidential interview, November 2012).

Overall, involvement in APGs does not appear to be a path to promotion – or at least not one that is reliable. However, simply because involvement in APGs may not lead to ministerial office does not mean that they are not used by parliamentarians as a way to acquire status or feelings of relevance, particularly for those MPs who seek to make a career on the backbenches. Backbench parliamentarians are all too familiar with the public perception that they have little influence on policy outcomes. In this context, APGs can help to provide a subjective sense of purpose or importance that may otherwise be lacking in an MP’s career.

In the UK, many respondents noted that MPs may join APGs in hopes of building their profile, making a name for themselves, or finding a “niche.” Yet echoing the “added status” that Morgan (1979) found MPs could gain from leading APGs, this profile building was distinct from the pursuit of executive office. Instead, leading or serving on the executive of an APG can allow parliamentarians to gain greater recognition and status among their constituents or within a given policy network. For example, when asked why a number of APGs had been formed on overlapping topics, one Conservative parliamentarian noted that MPs were increasingly seeking to chair their own APGs:

And I did notice after the last election in 2010, there were a few people enthusiastically setting up groups whose purpose was very similar to groups that were already in existence, but I think the new members had been told, ‘Well if you set up the group you’ll be chairman, so you can call yourself chairman of an all-party group, and that puts you in an eminent position.’ And I think quite a few of them did... You hadn’t considered the incredible driving force of egotism in many members of Parliament, and I’m sure it’s the same the world over (confidential interview, October 2012).

Remarkably similar views were expressed by both a long-time MSP at Holyrood and by a Canadian lobbyist when trying to explain why parliamentarians get involved in APGs:
And that’s another thing. Politicians like to be in control. Especially backbenchers because they have nothing else that they can control. I don’t mean that in a bad way, it just means that it’s something they can structure and deal for themselves. So ego, having control, and that stuff can be a very positive thing in trying to make their mark (MSP, confidential interview, December 2012).

If you're co-chair of a caucus you have a certain presence. It doesn't come with more budget or anything like that. There is a – not prestige – but there is a presence to it that I think is helpful for MPs. Whether it's an ego trip or whether it helps...yes, it helps your presence on the Hill, like I'm a somebody in this gaggle of MPs (Canadian lobbyist, confidential interview, November 2013).

This increased status can take several forms. Those leading APGs may be noted in the media as the leading politicians on an issue, such as when Canadian Conservative MP John Weston, Chair of the Canada-Taiwan Parliamentary Friendship Group, was referred to as “Ottawa’s key liaison with Taiwanese officials” in an article in the Vancouver Sun (Chiang, 2014), or when Conservative MP Dean Del Maestro was profiled in the Globe and Mail for his work as chair of the All-Party Rail Caucus (Taber, 2010). Such mentions are even more frequent within those dedicated publications that cover parliament. For instance, the Canadian publication The Hill Times documented the efforts by the co-chairs of the All-Party Women’s Caucus to contribute to the development of a new sexual harassment policy for MPs (e.g. Aiello, 2014; Ryckewaert, 2015). The chairs of various APGs from time to time also contribute op-eds in the parliament-focused news outlets regarding the need for policy change on their respective issues (Aspin, 2014; Brown, 2008; Crowder, 2010). Similar trends can also be found in the UK, although APG chairs at Westminster are much more likely to be asked for comment or to provide op-eds for the national media.

As discussed further in the next chapter, the status afforded to APG chairs is also enhanced by government relations firms, which highlight the role of the groups to their clients. In Canada, the parliamentary monitoring service Parliament Now maintains a list of APGs for its subscribers. In the UK, competing lists can be found. Dods parliamentary monitoring maintains a list of APG members, and its magazine The House publishes an annual guide to APGs that includes a list of group purposes and officers, as well as interviews with some APG chairs (“All-Party Groups: A Comprehensive Guide,” 2011). The APG positions held by MPs are also listed in Zetter’s Political Companion and by DeHavilland Political Intelligence. Likewise, Holyrood Magazine maintains lists of APG participation at the Scottish Parliament. In this way, being involved in an APG, particularly as an officer and especially as a group chair, has become another piece on each
parliamentarian’s CV alongside committee memberships, former occupations, and policy interests. The information from these lists is then used by government relations firms and their clients to identify who are the leaders on a given policy issue within parliament. Stakeholder groups are quite pleased when APG leaders achieve such status. Indeed, one British secretariat provider specifically stated that one of his organization’s objectives in supporting the group was for the chair to be seen as the leading spokesperson for the issue in parliament (confidential interview, November 2012).

This increase profile acquired through APGs can also change the way that parliamentarians engage with stakeholders. As noted above, APG officers often organize or are invited to attend receptions or other events marking various symbolic occasions, allowing them to mingle with external stakeholders as honoured guests or persons of importance on a given issue. APG leaders may also receive invitations to take part in conferences or workshops where again they can present themselves as speaking with authority on a given topic, with people interested, if not paying, to hear what they have to say. For a time, the website for the Canadian All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity even had a “Speaker’s Bureau” section, where outside actors could request a speaker from the group. As the page said, “Executive members can speak on themes related to genocide, specific situations of concern, current Canadian foreign policy for genocide prevention, and the Genocide Prevention Group’s current work. The secretariat of the Genocide Prevention Group can make arrangements for members of its executive to participate in a panel discussion or speak at an event” (All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity, 2012). At times, parliamentarians may become so caught up in such attention that they forget the all-party nature of the groups that they lead. For instance, Liberal MP Sean Casey wrote a scathing blog post regarding Conservative MP Blake Richards, chair of the Parliamentary Tourism Caucus, after Richards attended meetings with the Tourism Industry Association of Prince Edward Island in Casey’s riding, but failed to invite Casey, who was also a member of the caucus (Casey, 2013).

Beyond invitations to events and interest in their opinions, external actors also regularly provide external validation to parliamentarians for the time that they devote to APG activities, and particularly for the campaigning and policy work that they undertake. This validation can range from kind words at symbolic events, to formal awards and honours. Table 7.9 lists the Canadian
parliamentarians who were found to have received awards related to their work through APGs. Importantly, the list is not exhaustive, representing only those encountered during the research process. Similar awards were also encountered in the UK, with APPG on Cancer chair John Baron MP receiving Breakthrough Breast Cancer’s 2012 Patsy Calton Award, while MP Robert Halfon received Spectator Magazine’s 2013 MP Campaigner of the Year Award, in part for his work in the APPG on Fair Fuel for Motorists and Hauliers. The officers of the APPG on Cycling were also given “Honourary Membership Awards” in 2015 by Cycling UK for their work with the group. Parliamentarians often will then use these awards to attract further local publicity.

**Table 7.9 – Canadian Parliamentarians receiving awards for their work with APGs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parliamentarian(s)</th>
<th>Position and APG</th>
<th>Award and sponsor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harold Albrecht, MP</td>
<td>Co-chairs, Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care</td>
<td>Hospice Community Award (2012), Hospice of Waterloo Region,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frank Valeriote, MP</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harold Albrecht, MP</td>
<td>Chair, Canada-Armenia Parliamentary Friendship Group</td>
<td>Spirit of Armenia Award (2015), Canadian Armenian National Assembly Representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauril Belanger, MP</td>
<td>Chair, All-Party Co-operatives Caucus</td>
<td>The Achievement Award (2016), Co-operatives and Mutuals Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garry Breitkreuz, MP</td>
<td>Chair, Parliamentary Outdoors Caucus</td>
<td>International Legislator of the Year (2014), Safari Club International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garry Breitkreuz, MP</td>
<td>Chair, Parliamentary Outdoors Caucus</td>
<td>Jim Bourque Award (2015), Fur Institute of Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Brown, MP</td>
<td>Chair, Canada-India Parliamentary Friendship Group</td>
<td>Honorary Citizen of Gujarat (2011), Government of Gujarat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcel Prud’homme, Senator</td>
<td>Chair, Canada-Russia Parliamentary Friendship Group</td>
<td>Order of Friendship (2007), Russian Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blake Richards, MP</td>
<td>Chair, Parliamentary Tourism Caucus</td>
<td>Tourism Champion Award (2015), Tourism Industry Association of Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Stoffer, MP</td>
<td>Chair, Canada-Netherlands Parliamentary Friendship Group</td>
<td>Knight in the Order of Orange-Nassau (2015), Kingdom of the Netherlands</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to greater status and respect from external stakeholders, belonging to an APG can provide personal enjoyment as well, especially for group chairs and officers. Such benefits range from enjoying the food and drinks provided at APG events or those put on by sponsor
organizations to tickets to concerts, sporting events, and international travel. Personal enjoyment is perhaps most obviously a factor in the “parliamentary clubs” at Westminster. While registered as APGs, their purpose is to allow parliamentarians to share their common enjoyment in a particular sport or past-time. For instance, the stated purpose of the *APPG for the Lords and Commons Cricket Club* is “To organise and play cricket matches for parliamentarians” (United Kingdom. Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, 2015b: 254). The group is also separate from the *APPG on Cricket*, whose purpose is “To support and promote the interests of cricket at all levels.” The official number of clubs operating at Westminster has declined in recent years, falling from six in 1996 to just three prior to the 2015 election (the *Cricket*, *Football*, and *Rugby Union* clubs). However, these groups have been joined by a range of others, such as the APPGs for the *Parliament Choir*, *Jazz Appreciation*, *Philately*, and *Rowing*, that – while possibly dealing with some policy issues – appear to function more as clubs for parliamentarians with common interests. For instance, the *Parliament Choir* holds regular concerts with a choir made up of MPs, Peers, and parliamentary staff, while the *APPG on Rowing* hosts an annual race on the Thames that includes a competition between MPs and Peers. Moreover, despite dropping off the official list of parliamentary clubs between 1996 and 2015, the *APPG on Tennis* still exists in part to organize tennis matches between parliamentarians.

The potential for personal enjoyment can also be found in other APGs as well. In Canada, the *Parliamentary Outdoors Caucus* holds an annual event at a shooting range just outside of Ottawa sponsored by the Canadian Shooting Sports Association, the Outdoor Caucus Association of Canada, and the Canadian Sporting Arms and Ammunition Association. A press release issued by Conservative MP Bob Zimmer, the caucus chair, indicated that the 2015 edition was attended by roughly 60 MPs, Senators and parliamentary staff (Zimmer, 2015). In the UK, examples include the trip to the Severn Valley Railway by the *All-Party Parliamentary Heritage Rail Group*, and the annual walk by the *APPG on Mountaineering*, which in 2013 conducted a 13 mile trek through the Yorkshire Dales in the company of professional mountain climber Sir Chris Bonington (“Everest hero Chris Bonington joins Yorkshire Dales trek,” 2013). At Holyrood, the meetings of the *CPG on Culture* typically include a musical or theatrical performance, a film screening, or a reading from a new piece of literature. These examples are not provided to suggest that the parliamentarians who join such groups are only seeking enjoyable experiences. However, such activities likely make the groups more attractive to potential members.
The role played by personal enjoyment is also evident in groups that engage in travel. Several of those interviewed for their involvement in subject APGs derisively described the foreign travel undertaken by parliamentarians in inter-country APGs as “junkets” (the term used by Canadian respondents) or “jollies (the term used by respondents at Westminster). While not doubting that inter-country APGs can produce concrete results, it is nonetheless true that parliamentarians who take part in inter-country groups do benefit from international travel to interesting places in the world, where they are frequently treated to nice meals and quality beverages. Indeed, despite noting the benefits of such trips in terms of parliamentary diplomacy, one Canadian Senator was quite open about having become involved in inter-country APGs in part to enjoy the travel experience: “You pick the country that you want to go to and you join that club. And you get yourself on the executive, so you plan the tours. And you negotiate with the ambassador, or the trade rep, or the counsel or whoever is the number two as to where you want to go” (confidential interview, November 2013). A British MP active in a number of inter-country APGs similarly noted that “certain groups have certain privileges” in terms of travel (confidential interview, May 2013).

For parliamentarians used to being somewhat ignored on the backbenches and criticized by their constituents, having external stakeholders show such interest in their work, invite them to dinners and conferences, or furnish them with opportunities for personal enjoyment can be very rewarding and enticing in and of itself, not to mention the local and media profile that can result from such participation. As one Canadian Senator put it when discussing the attention received from diplomats involved with inter-country APGs, “They appreciate us, they send us Christmas gifts, they take us on trips. It makes us feel important, instead of the piece of shit we usually feel up here” (confidential interview, November 2013). Similar feelings of importance are likely a byproduct of the interactions between the parliamentarians involved with APGs and virtually any supportive stakeholder group.

However, while perhaps still enjoying feelings of importance, for some parliamentarians just being involved with an APG can provide intrinsic rewards. For instance, a magazine profile of the Canada-Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Parliamentary Friendship Group described the impact involvement had on two of the group’s co-chairs:
[NDP MP Tyrone] Benskin recalled the memorable moment when he told his parents he had become the co-chair of the Canada-CARICOM Parliamentary Friendship Group… for the Jeanne-Le Ber, Que. MP it was significant.

“They know about all the other stuff…but I think this one was probably closer to the heart that their son is in there and speaking for their home country and raising the profile,” said Mr. Benskin, whose parents are from Barbados…

[Conservative Senator Don] Meredith had similar thoughts running through his head. The two teamed up to give the group a push.

“I’m indeed proud of this accomplishment and proud of the fact that I’m able as an African-Canadian and as a Jamaican-Canadian to contribute to the development of the region in any way that I can,” Mr. Meredith told Chatter House in an interview (Duggal, 2013b).

Such intrinsic motivation can also occur in subject groups. When asked if APG members use the information they receive at group meetings to influence their own parties, one Canadian MP stressed that it was important to try to obtain policy change whether such impact was visible or not:

I wouldn’t diminish anyone that attends these caucuses by saying that they just come and listen and don’t do anything with it [the information]… But the leadership in each of their parties, of course, would prevail and so they do it if they can. It’s the proverbial myth of Sisyphus. You know, we’ve got to keep pushing the rock up the hill, and when it rolls back down you just get it and push it back up again. You’ve got to keep the momentum going (confidential Interview, November 2013).

A British MP who expressed a similar idea when explaining why the APG he led had launched an inquiry on a given topic: “Well I felt passionately that… something needed to be done. I’ve never been driven by what’s popular or what isn’t to be honest with you. I think I do things because they are right… I’m not sure how much it will assist me personally” (confidential interview, November 2013).

Some parliamentarians also indicated that they became involved with APGs in part to find a creative output after realizing that they were unlikely to be promoted to cabinet – a finding that can help to explain the greater participation in APGs among returning MPs in Canada and the UK. One Canadian MP was particularly blunt when assessing his chances for promotion: “A white male, aged [in his 60s] with cabinet aspirations? That’s a huge oxymoron right there. From an area that already has a cabinet minister, geographically?” (confidential interview, March
2013). Instead he had turned to APGs as a way to pursue a number of personal interests. A similar view was expressed by a long-serving British MP who had also given up on moving to the executive:

> Look, you get out of an all-party group which you put into it. So because it’s my number one passion, I think the all-party group gets a good bit of my time. I know it does… So is it a means to getting promoted? I think it’s a means of, if you use it effectively of, it’s a very good campaigning tool. I’m not sure if they’re going to get you promoted to be honest. There’s just too many of them… I don’t call it promoted to serving the executive, because you can’t be promoted from being a member of parliament. I’m a career backbencher, so I think being a member parliament’s much more important than being a minister (confidential interview, November 2012).

APGs can also provide a way for parliamentarians to find new purpose after leaving cabinet. As one MSP put it, “I’d just ceased to be a Minister and so I was kind of licking my wounds, consigned to the backbenches. And I just threw myself into [the APG] and it was fantastic – absolutely fantastic, and I’ve loved it” (confidential interview, November 2012). These accounts are theoretically important given that existing research has found that a lack of policy influence is one of the factors that has led to a high rate of voluntary turnover among backbench Canadian MPs (Kerby and Blidook, 2011). Involvement in APGs may therefore help to provide an alternative career structure that could prevent such voluntary exits among long serving parliamentarians.

Finally, it should also be noted that some parliamentarians utilize their work with APGs to secure employment or consulting fees. This activity is distinct from those situations in the UK whereby parliamentarians were found to have accepted funds in exchange for creating APGs. Instead, it typically involves former parliamentarians using the knowledge and connections they acquired to secure employment after leaving elected office. In Canada, former Liberal MP Mario Silva went from being co-chair of the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism to being appointed by the Canadian government to chair the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance for 2013-2014 (Levy-Ajzenkopf, 2012). Former Liberal MP Paddy Torsney also went from chairing the Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to eventually serving as the Inter-Parliamentary Union’s Permanent Observer to the United Nations (United Nations, 2014). At Westminster, former Conservative MP Nick de Bois, who had chaired the APPG for the Events Industry until losing his seat in the 2015 election, was soon after appointed as chair of the
British government’s new Business Visits and Events Board (Deighton, 2015). Likewise, after losing his seat in the 2010 election, former Labour MP Andy Reed, who had held leadership positions in a number of sport-related APGs (including the APPG for Sport), became director of the UK’s Sport and Recreation Alliance, which provides the secretariat to the APPG for Sport.

However, some parliamentarians have not been so patient as to wait until after leaving parliament before using the connections acquired via APGs to pursue new opportunities. A case in point was when undercover journalists posing as investors recorded British Conservative MP Mark Pritchard offering to use contacts he had developed through various inter-country APGs to help them with development opportunities. He particularly highlighted his close links to the Prime Minister of Albania and the mayor of its capital city developed through the APPG on Albania. Mr. Pritchard indicated that should the journalists wish formal advice, then his typical fee would be “£3,000.00 per month, plus reasonable expenses” (Watt et al., 2013). Mr. Pritchard was certainly very active in APGs, and as of August 2014 was a qualifying member for 51 inter-country groups and an officer of 26, potentially giving him a wide range of international contacts. However, the UK Parliament has no rules preventing him or any other MP from charging consulting fees in exchange for access to the networks they develop through APGs. Closing such loopholes would go a long way towards increasing public confidence that APGs are actually being used for parliamentary diplomacy, not personal enrichment.

While not typically a pathway to a cabinet position, APGs can still provide a way for parliamentarians to gain influence, status, purpose, and personal enjoyment. Although the balance between them will vary, often the four go hand-in-hand, with parliamentarians who hold leadership positions within APGs carrying a greater weight in policy discussions, being sought after by outside stakeholders, feeling good about themselves for attempting to obtain policy change, and enjoying the perks of APG membership – be it food and drink, cultural events, or international travel. In this way, involvement in APGs can provide an alternative career structure and purpose for those parliamentarians passed over for promotion to the executive. However, these benefits of status and influence accrue almost exclusively to group chairs and a small number of officers.
5 Conclusion

The data in this chapter make it clear that the factors shaping APG involvement vary significantly been legislatures, and that different parliamentarians join may join different APGs for different reasons. While the quantitative study is limited by the poorer quality of the Canadian data, the absence of information for Ontario, and the challenge posed by the two types of Scottish parliamentarians, it nevertheless is possible to conclude that past research on APG participation at the US Congress cannot be extrapolated directly to Westminster systems, and that there are major differences in the factors shaping APG participation in the three jurisdictions examined. In particular, no consistent relationships were found between APG participation and margin of victory or time in office. Significant differences also existed between the parliamentarians in each jurisdiction based on their party, the formal leadership positions they held, and their demographic characteristics. In the end, the only finding that was constant across all three jurisdictions was that parliamentarians holding senior positions in the executive were much less likely to be involved in APG activities, and that APG participation by women legislators differed from that of men.

This lack of consistency across the cases appears to flow from the different roles played by APGs in each jurisdiction. For instance, British MPs with low margins of victory will use APG participation as a tool to enhance their electoral prospects in part because the groups can be used to openly campaign for change on various policy issues. In contrast, MSPs worried about their electoral prospects find that the APGs at Holyrood are poorly suited as vehicles for campaigning on local issues given. This is not to say that MSPs do not join the APGs at Holyrood to work on constituency issues, but rather that the consensus-oriented nature of the groups makes it difficult for them to visibly challenge the government on most matters. The same is to some extent true of the APGs in Canada as well, although there seems to be a greater acceptance in Ottawa of APG activity on constituency related issues.

Differences in APG participation across the jurisdictions also appears to be shaped by the permeability of the front-bench to new entrants. At the Canadian and British Parliaments, many MPs appear to become involved in APGs later in their careers as a way to find a role or purpose for themselves after giving up on front-bench positions. In contrast, the smaller number of members at the Scottish Parliament means that virtually all MSPs not holding cabinet positions
tend to be involved in group activities to some extent. Moreover, the consensus-oriented nature of Scottish APGs means that those aspiring to front bench positions generally do not need to worry that their engagement will place them offside of their parties on major issues.

Curiously, the regression results also show that the factors influencing APG involvement for British and Canadian MPs tended to be same for participation at both the general member and the executive level. Indeed, while the strength of the relationships varied, across the eight regression analyses performed for APG engagement in UK and Canada there were just three relationships that were significant for one level of involvement but not for the other as well.\textsuperscript{56} This result is surprising given that the parliamentarians interviewed in both jurisdictions stressed both the greater costs associated with group leadership and the greater benefits that accrue to leaders as well. Moreover, many respondents noted being members of groups in which they were not actively engaged. This result may flow from the fact that those parliamentarians who are active as the leaders of one APG are in turn more likely to be approached to be members of others. Nevertheless, further research is required, particularly since the regression results for Scottish parliamentarians showed much greater variation in the factors shaping APG participation for general and executive members. Given that APGs at Holyrood tend to have very small executives of just two or three members, the data from that jurisdiction may more precisely distinguish those parliamentarians who are truly engaged as APG leaders from those who hold more ceremonial positions as officers.

Despite this ambiguity on the question of the factors shaping participation between group leaders and members, both the quantitative and qualitative results from each jurisdiction confirmed that parliamentarians’ engagement in subject focused APGs is often shaped by different factors from those shaping involvement in inter-country APGs. For instance, the regression results revealed that while female MPs at Westminster were significantly more likely than their male colleagues to take part in subject APGs as both qualifying members and group officers, they were significantly less likely to take part in inter-country groups in either capacity. Similarly the parliamentarians interviewed were quite up front that involvement with inter-country APGs

\textsuperscript{56} In the UK, Labour MPs were significantly more likely to be members of inter-country APGs, but no relationship existed at the executive level. In Canada, NDP MPs were significantly less likely to be members of the officially recognized inter-country groups and to serve on the executive of subject groups, but neither relationship translated to other levels of participation in the same group types.
brought was viewed differently by their constituents and could distract from constituency engagement.

While some respondents noted joining APGs due to pressure from external actors or to gather information relevant to their parliamentary duties, overall, parliamentarians were much more likely to become active or to hold leadership positions in those groups that also overlapped with constituency or personal interests. Indeed, while a few parliamentarians admitted to joining an APG to build their personal profile, gain contacts, or to pursue personal enjoyment, most pointed out such motivations in their colleagues, while indicating that their own APG activities flowed from a desire to secure change policy change for their constituents or to make a difference on an issue that they cared about personally. However, it would be unrealistic to believe that parliamentarians are not aware of the greater status that APG members and particularly group leaders enjoy within stakeholder communities, or the potential to use APG activities as grounds for connecting with constituents or building a profile within parliament. As such, demonstration effects appear to play a major role in increasing APG involvement among legislators in all four case study jurisdictions, with the benefits received by parliamentarians involved in established APGs illustrating the potential benefits to those who others who might join those groups, or establish their own.

Several respondents also noted that their involvement in APGs provided them with personal satisfaction or meaning within their parliamentary careers. When such feelings of fulfilment are combined with the more immediate benefits of increased visibility, greater status among stakeholders, and potential perks such as travel or cultural events, involvement in APGs would appear to provide a secondary career structure for backbench parliamentarians. In the UK, this structure appears to exist in parallel to the more recognized structure whereby legislators seek to obtain positions on their parties’ respective front-benches. In Scotland and Canada, the career opportunities provided through APGs appear to be more supplementary in nature, with shadow ministers also taking part in APG activities in addition to their front-bench activities.

57 Except perhaps in Ontario, given the small number of APGs.
CHAPTER 8

FACTORS SHAPING PARTICIPATION BY EXTERNAL ACTORS

1 Introduction

The previous chapter demonstrates that there are a number of reasons why parliamentarians may choose to join APGs and to participate in their activities on an ongoing basis. Yet the informal nature of APGs means that most cannot survive – or at the very least would be much less active – without financial or in-kind support from external actors. As such, a theory for the growth of APGs must not only account for why parliamentarians are increasingly choosing to take part in APG activities, but also why these external actors increasingly choosing to support them. At the same time, such support has raised ongoing ethical concerns among outside observers who allege that APGs have become tools for inappropriate lobbying and influence by these same outside actors. As described in Chapter Two, these concerns have led to increasingly rigorous regulations governing the activities and financing of APGs in Scotland, the UK, and even in Canada.

Chapter Five examined the external support received by APGs in the four case study jurisdictions, and particularly the distribution of that support across different groups in each jurisdiction. This chapter changes focus, first exploring the nature of the organizations that provide support to APGs, the forms of support that they provide, and how both have changed over time. It then examines actors’ motivations for becoming involved with APGs, and how their engagement with APGs relates to their other government relations activities. This analysis reveals that while corporations and business associations once made up the majority of the APG supporters in Canada and the UK, and a substantial portion of those in Scotland, charities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and individuals are now the dominant providers of external assistance to APGs in all three jurisdictions. The same is also true in Ontario, though the small number of APGs makes it impossible to draw firm conclusions. In addition, the study also reveals that different types of actors tend to engage with APGs in different ways. While corporations are more likely to provide direct financial contributions or, in the UK, to hire lobby
firms to engage with APGs on their behalf, charities and other not-for-profit organizations tend to provide secretarial or in-kind assistance.

In terms of motivations, external actors have long supported APGs in the hopes of securing policy influence over the medium to longer term. While creating an APG is often not a useful response to a short term crisis, sponsoring APGs provide external actors with a way to form relationships with parliamentarians and to share information with them on an ongoing basis, so that when policy decisions do need to be made, legislators are more likely to support the actors’ preferred positions. In this way, APG members – and especially their leaders – become the external actors’ internal champions within a legislature, and often come to have a sense of ownership an issue due to their involvement in group activities.

However, here too different tactics can be found between different types of external partners. Charities and not-for-profits tend to link their APG engagement with their broader campaigning and work. Rather than waiting for policy issues to arise, the APGs they support are more likely to actively introduce new policy or legislative initiatives and vocally pursue their adoption using tools such as group reports, inquiries, and even private members’ business – at times with the support of coordinated grassroots lobbying campaigns. By comparison, those APGs supported by corporations or business associations tend to be less assertive. While they may produce policy reports, their recommendations are generally pursued through contacts with ministers rather than legislative debates or op-eds. These trends, which are largely uniform across the jurisdictions examined, would appear to result precisely from the fact that activism by charities or not-for-profits tends to attract less scrutiny and criticism from outside observers.

While policy influence is the primary objective for most external actors that support APGs, the surge in such engagement in recent years would appear to result from demonstration effects, with policy changes achieved by early APG supporters inspiring other actors to pursue the same strategy. However, in addition to such imitation, creating and supporting APGs has also become a standard part of the lobbyist toolkit in Canada, Scotland, and the UK, with government relations manuals now presenting the groups as an effective option for outside actors wishing to shape policy decisions. As such, establishing an APG has become a standard deliverable that lobbyists – whether in-house or hired from professional firms – can provide to their employers,
to some extent helping to justify their own positions even if the groups themselves achieve little in the way of tangible benefits.

These findings would appear to quell the worst fears regarding the use of APGs as front bodies for inappropriate influence by outside moneyed interests that wish to buy their way into legislative proceedings. However, while corporations and business associations tend to be less aggressive in pursuing policy change through APGs, it is still possible that support from charities and other not-for-profits may distort legislative priorities. In particular, parliamentarians may come to disproportionately focus on those causes that have a wide support base and successful fundraising, which may not necessarily be those that would produce the best overall improvements in public policy.

2 Existing research

Even considering the general lack of research on APGs, the factors that motivate external actors to support APGs are surprisingly underexplored especially in the American context. For instance, Ringe et al. (2013) make support from external actors a centrepiece of their theory, arguing that congressional APGs could not operate as low cost networks for the distribution of information without the “legislative subsidies” provided by external actors, such as logistical support, briefing material, and funding for hospitality costs. In return, these actors gain privileged ties to the leadership networks that operate the groups, as well as an audience for the information they provide. However, despite playing such a pivotal role in their model, Ringe et al. (2013) do not actually explore why these actors choose to become involved with APGs or how such support relates to the broader spectrum of government relations activities that these actors undertake. Instead, they largely sidestep the question. Indeed, while acknowledging that they will presumably seek to advance their own policy preferences, Ringe et al. present external actors as almost apolitical. Instead, they stress that the network-based structure of APGs allows legislators to verify the information provided and sanction dishonesty, giving actors them strong incentives to group members with “high quality information that is research-based, reliable, and presented in an easily digestible format” (43). Moreover, Ringe et al. argue that the connections between group members and other external stakeholders mean that those actors that provide misleading information are likely to be found out, causing them to suffer reputational harm and to lose the privileged access to legislators that they enjoy through APGs. Yet Ringe et al. do not examine
the potential advantages of working through APGs relative to other ways of influencing the policy agenda, and whether such considerations might vary based on the type actors involved.

Hammond (1998) similarly does not consider why outside actors choose to support congressional APGs, although she does make some observations regarding the relationship between the issues they address and the strategies for influence that they employ. She notes that “national constituency” caucuses (i.e. those that advance the interests of a particular societal group, like African Americans) “often seek to activate grassroots groups when an important issue is pending” (1998: 184). However, in this description, the onus is on legislators to reach out to interested groups, with no consideration of when outside actors might try to mobilize legislators.

The beginnings of a more nuanced American analysis of the links between external support for APGs and other forms of lobbying can be found in Schuler et al.’s (2002) study of congressional lobbying, which presents industry-focused APGs, such as the Congressional Steel Caucus, as one of the tools that businesses employ to influence the legislative agenda. More importantly, they find that the presence of an all party caucus for a given industry increases the likelihood that firms will employ additional lobbying tactics, such as funding political campaigns, hiring dedicated lobbyists, or trying to mobilize “grassroots constituencies.” Schuler et al. suggest this relationship may exist because “Firms might have calculated that contacts on the Hill [through caucuses] would increase the usefulness of their political activities” (2002: 667). Involvement in APGs therefore is seen to prime legislators to be receptive to further lobbying.

In contrast to the US, the literature on lobbying and Parliament within the UK has been much more sensitive to the use of APGs as a lobbying tool. In his classic work Anonymous Empire, Finer (1958a) describes APGs as parliamentary “panels” that are created by outside lobby groups, such as the Glass Manufacturers Association, the Engineering Industries Association, and the Royal British Legion, to obtain “[e]stablished access to friendly MPs” (1958a: 54). Finer’s profile of the roads and transportation lobby in the UK (1958b) also highlights the All-Party Roads Study Group, which was established in 1957 by an industry body called the “Roads Campaign Council.” He underlined the group’s potential for influence, noting that the RCC “has opened a way into the ranks of the back-benchers on either side of the House, where, as we have said, ministers and shadow ministers can be put to considerable embarrassment” (1958b: 53). The RCC brought in experts to group meetings and took parliamentarians on trips to inspect new
road developments in Germany and the Netherlands – examples which featured prominently in subsequent parliamentary debates. Eckstein (1960) similarly documents how the British Medical Association (BMA) drove the formation of the Parliamentary Medical Group as a way to engage with parliamentarians. However, he is more cautious than Finer about the group’s potential influence, pointing out that the BMA also continued to build relationships with the bureaucracy and the government, and was reluctant to rely too heavily on the group as a lobbying tool given MPs’ lack of specialist knowledge.

Writing a decade later, Barker and Rush (1970) explore APGs as part of the “information network” available to British MPs. They present APGs as a manifestation of the “accepted PR [public relations] view that ‘regular contacts’ during normal situations is the true foundation of any influence which may be enjoyed in a special or crisis situation” (1970: 112). Moreover, they found that this dynamic extended equally to both subject and inter-country APGs:

As is the case of the all-party groups on civil liberties or animal welfare, the [inter-country] Group as such is secondary to the idea to having some sympathetic Members (preferably of all parties) who can help with wider good relations by suggesting Members to invite to embassy receptions or to be invited on an official visit to the country concerned during normal times and by lobbying or organising on behalf of the country if difficulties in its relations with Britain arise (1970: 111).

Thus, consistent with Schuler et al. (2002), Barker and Rush argue that outside actors support British APGs in hopes of developing relationships with parliamentarians that in turn lay the ground work for other forms of lobbying. However, Barker and Rush appear to cast doubt on the utility of APGs as tools for short-term advocacy.

In keeping with Ringe et al. (2013), Barker and Rush also note that MPs may become frustrated if the information from their external partners is not reliable or easily accessible. While MPs expect that the information will support the organization’s cause, it cannot present an unrealistic picture of the true situation. Others, however, stress that the organizations that support APGs can still shape how parliamentarians understand issues even without providing misleading information. In particular, Judge notes that APGs can influence policy and legislation by filtering outside information and offering it in a format that is easily useable by parliamentarians, thereby shaping the resources available when parliamentarians make decisions. This process, Judge argues, is neither passive nor neutral:
The ultimate logic of outside organisations’ involvement with all-party committees is that their particular interest can be advanced to the point of influencing policy. This might be through a process akin to osmosis, whereby information permeates the consciousness of backbenchers over a long period of time; or to cathexis, whereby information is injected into the parliamentary process at a time when the House is actively considering an issue. Once MPs have been provided with information, they are clearly expected to do something with it!... The expectation [is] that all-party groups will actively seek to promote and not simply retail the information within the House (1990: 213, emphasis in original).

Judge (1990) further expresses concerns that the lobbyists who operate APG secretariats may try to block other interests from accessing the groups to provide conflicting points of view. In keeping with Ringe et al. (2013), the MPs and lobbyists Judge interviewed downplayed this possibility by pointing out that parliamentarians have other sources of information. However, such concerns were also shared by Doig, who stressed that giving outside actors research positions within APGs blurred the line between stakeholders and parliamentarians:

If lobbyists act as research assistants or provide back-up to all-party groups, they are less one of several interests competing for the attention of the decision-makers than part of the process themselves. Other interests must be disadvantaged; either they have to battle to be heard before MPs or all-party groups already colonised by their competitors, or they have to adopt the tactics of their competitors (1986a: 41).

Doig (1986b) especially focuses on the operations of the APPG for Pensioners, which were investigated by the Select Committee on Members Interests in 1985 as part of a broader study on lobbying. Since 1976 the charity Age Concern had provided an employee to support the group’s activities. The employee split his time between Age Concern’s head office, where he briefed the charity on parliamentary developments, and the office of the group’s chair, where he provided logistical support for APGs events and developed briefings for members. While the committee found that the charity did not use this position to block other groups from accessing the APG, Doig highlighted that its support was beneficial to the “age lobby” as a whole (1986b). In particular, he noted Age Concern’s testimony that its arrangement with the APG was more efficient and cost-effective than engaging with MPs separately. Serving as the secretariat to the APG therefore provided Age Concern with first-hand information on parliamentary proceedings, the opportunity to align its messaging with the views of parliamentarians, a position of authority in the eyes of group members, and the ability to maximize the efficiency of its resources.
This blurring of the line between parliamentarians and outside actors is also highlighted by Jones (1990), who describes how APGs offer a way for external pressure groups to gain political attention and to launder their messages through the actions of legislators. As he writes:

> [APGs] have long been regarded as a natural focus for pressure-group attention. An all-party group can perform several services [for external actors], from asking parliamentary questions… to tabling Early-Day Motions as a means of identifying and recruiting additional supporters. Ministers are reluctant to deny access to delegations promoted by all-party groups and the media tend to look less critically on a press statement which carries an ‘all-party parliamentary’ imprint than one issued by an identifiable or self-proclaimed pressure groups. At the very least therefore, organized interests look to the all-party groups to stimulate parliamentary interest, to raise the political salience of particular issues, and, ultimately, to place them on the political and parliamentary agenda (1990: 126).

Jones (1990) also examined how external actors in the UK engage with the backbench policy committees within each party, such as the Conservatives’ 1922 Committee, relative to APGs. Drawing on a survey of 250 lobbyists conducted by the Study of Parliament Group, he finds that more respondents reported contacts with APGs than with party policy committees (47.6 percent versus 40.9 percent). When asked to evaluate the usefulness of these engagements, 21.0 percent of lobbyists found their contacts with the APGs to be “Very useful” as compared to 12.6 percent for party committees. However, the distribution of such contacts varied by actor type. While 89.5 percent of respondents from labour organizations had contacted party committees, just 36.8 percent had been in touch with APGs – a difference Jones attributed to the close relationship between unions and the Labour Party. The corresponding figures for corporate lobbyists were just 54.8 and 52.4 percent respectively, suggesting that they lacked the same established ties.

Differences were also found between lobbyists from “insider groups,” which are regularly consulted by the government, and “outsider groups,” which are not. Outsiders were almost twice as likely to report that contacts with APGs were very useful (26.2 percent versus 14.3 percent). They also stressed the need to avoid being seen as partisan, and so were attracted to APGs as vehicles for parliamentary engagement. Some insiders, however, felt that the absence of partisanship meant that APGs were too distanced from real politics (Jones, 1990: 132). A similar

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58 For more details on the distinction between insider and outsider pressure groups and sectional and promotional pressure groups see Rush (1990).
dichotomy could be found between those representing “sectional” groups, such as unions or business associations, and those lobbying on behalf of “promotional” causes, such as nuclear disarmament. The former reported more contacts with party committees, while the latter were more engaged with APGs. Jones concludes that APGs are of greater use for “those interest groups outside the political establishment or who seek to promote issues at variance with established values” (1990: 134).

Similar arguments are made by Norton (2012), who reports that APGs are valued by external actors as a way to build relationships with sympathetic parliamentarians, and through them to influence ministers. In keeping with Jones, Norton points out that the non-party nature of APGs can make ministers more responsive to their requests, and that some external actors may prefer to work with APGs due to their non-partisan nature. As Norton writes, “All-party groups are especially attractive to interest groups as they operate outside the context of party – the groups cannot be accused of siding with any particular party” (2013: 138).

The literature on APGs from Scotland is much more limited. The few studies that examine the APGs at the Scottish Parliament only tangentially examine the factors that motivate external actors to support APGs, and even then there is often a failure to distinguish between those that are group members and those external actors that actually provide secretariat support. For instance, Cloonan et al. (2004) examine efforts by the CPG on Scottish Contemporary Music Industry to shape the Scottish government’s cultural policies. While presenting the group as having some influence, the picture painted by the authors is not flattering:

This Group is made up of MSPs, individual managers and musicians, assorted industry representatives, and some educationalists. It is essentially a talking shop… but it does give some focus to music industry discussions in Scotland and some scrutiny of policy developments. Its approach, though, is, to say the least, erratic. The politicians in the group have no clear agenda except a vaguely populist belief that popular music should be taken as seriously by the executive as other kinds of music and media. The industry people who attend regularly have little in common except a sense of self-importance, a belief that they are the people who know best how the industry works and what it needs. Either way, members of the Group were exercised about Scottish Enterprise’s Cultural Industries Strategy, by its apparent tendency to fund music initiatives without consulting the experts (i.e. themselves). [Scottish Enterprise]’s music team leaders were summoned to explain their music support plans in public. Two
stormy meetings followed and led to Scottish Enterprise attempting to placate its critics (2004: 210).  

While not making a distinction between the group’s secretariat (the Scottish Arts Council) and the other external members, this account suggests that external actors may turn to APGs as a way to seek redress with parliamentarians if they find that their efforts to lobby the government directly have been unsuccessful.

Further support for this idea of APGs as a means of recourse can be found in Cairney’s (2007) account of the development of Scotland’s ban on smoking in public places. The Scottish Executive initially refused calls for the measure on the grounds that the competency for workplace health and safety had not been devolved from Westminster. Yet as Cairney writes, tobacco control advocacy groups had a realistic alternative venue to pursue the issue in the Scottish Parliament. MSPs and ASH [Action on Smoking and Health] Scotland set up a cross-party group on tobacco control (in 2000) and part of its agenda was to tackle smoking in public places by framing it in terms of devolved competence [over public health]… The main output of this process was a Member’s Bill lodged by Stewart Maxwell MSP (Scottish National Party (SNP)) in February 2004 (2007: 78).

The bill in turn led to a committee process that recommended a comprehensive ban on smoking in public places. Cairney credits the shift in policy venue from the Scottish Executive to the Scottish Parliament for allowing the smoking ban campaign to ultimately succeed. However, it should be noted that both of these efforts by external actors to use APGs as alternative venues for policy influence took advantage of APGs that were already up and running.

The Canadian literature on APG engagement by outside actors even more limited, with the few studies of Canadian APGs that have been written tending to focus more on the officially recognized inter-country groups (Levy, 1974; Parliamentary Centre, 2003). However, there have been a few reports highlighting how foreign governments have supported Canada’s unrecognized inter-country APGs in the hopes of shaping Canadian government policy. In 1986, a lead story in the Montreal Gazette detailed how the government of South Korea had used the Canada-Korea  

59 This critical description by Cloonan et al. (2004) should perhaps be taken with a grain of salt given that the CPG on the Scottish Contemporary Music Industry criticized a report that Cloonan and his co-authors had produced for Scottish Enterprise on Scotland’s music industry.
Parliamentary Association in order to influence parliamentarians (Diebel, 1985). It described how MPs were flown to Korea and treated “like visiting heads of state” with “choice dinner and entertainment” in addition to being given “posh” luncheons in Ottawa. The connections made through the association reportedly helped Hyundai Canada to convince the Mulroney government not to impose tariffs on automotive imports from Korea – changes that were expected to save Hyundai roughly $120 million in duties. Similarly, a review of the Canada-Taiwan Parliamentary Friendship Group by Hulme (2010) found that friendship groups can be an effective way for foreign governments to shape Canadian policy. He traces the government of Taiwan’s efforts to court Canadian parliamentarians in hopes of securing greater international recognition and stronger relations with the government of Canada. In both cases, the foreign governments used hospitality, international travel, and briefings to build relationships over the long-term and to convert parliamentarians into internal lobbyists on their behalf. As of yet, no literature has been produced on APGs at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

Together these past studies suggest that external actors choose to support APGs as part of broader lobbying initiatives. The general objective is to develop trusting relationships with parliamentarians over the long-term. As part of this process parliamentarians are provided with information that gradually shapes their understanding of the issues addressed by the group and how they are defined. The provision of hospitality, travel or other benefits can also build positive feelings towards the supporting organizations, be they foreign governments, lobby groups, or charities. The external actors can then draw upon these relationships at times when specific issues arise, or when they find that the government is not responsive to their demands.

However, the studies suggest that working through APGs is not equally beneficial or available for all actors or issues. Taking the time to build relationships may not be possible for organizations that lack the resources to engage with parliamentarians on a regular basis. Organizations with policy objectives that are either very specific or short-term in nature are also unlikely to see many benefits from the ongoing relationship maintenance involved in APGs. Likewise, actors that already possess strong ties to government bureaucrats may find that APGs provide little added value. Conversely, those that are shut out of such policy discussions may see APGs as an alternative way to influence decision makers. Indeed, such “outsiders” also may simply be happy to have their voices heard by anyone with a semblance of authority. Overall,
these studies demonstrate the importance of exploring how engagement with APGs varies between different types of actors and different policy fields.

3 Overview of external partners and support provided

To better understand which external actors support APG activities and why, datasets were created for each jurisdiction that captured the identities of the contributors to each group, and, where possible, the nature of the support that they supplied (e.g. direct financial contributions vs. in-kind services). Each actor was coded by its organization type (e.g. charity, NGO, business association, corporation, government agency, etc.), making it possible to explore how the level of engagement and the preferred methods of support varied between them. A diachronic approach was also employed to capture whether APG growth in recent years had been disproportionately fuelled by some actors rather than others. However, given the large number of external actors that provided support to APGs, particularly in the UK, and the time involved to properly code each actor, the analysis was limited to two time periods for each jurisdiction: the most recent complete parliamentary session and the oldest session for which reliable data were available.

The data themselves were largely gathered in the same way as that for participation by parliamentarians as described in Chapter Seven. However, for each jurisdiction the range of information available on the support received by APGs is somewhat different from that regarding participation by parliamentarians. Although British APGs have been required to declare the support they receive from outside sources since the late 1980s, the documents initially were only displayed in the parliamentary library, and no archived copies were maintained. However, beginning in 2000 the APG registry was put online, and while copies were still not archived by the Parliament itself, they can be accessed using the Internet Archive, making it possible to extend the study back to the end of the 1997-2001 parliamentary session. Given that the number of APGs in operation rises during the time between elections, the last possible registry available for that Parliament was used, dated 6 April 2001. The registry used for the 2010-2015 Parliament was dated 18 August 2014, which at the time was the most recent data available. Webscraping software was used to extract the data for analysis.

It is unfortunate that the study cannot be extended prior to the 1997-2001 Parliament as rapid APG growth had already commenced by that point, preventing a full comparison of which organizations were engaged with APGs before and after such rapid growth began. However,
given that the number of APGs in operation at Westminster nearly doubled from 316 to 609 between April 2001 and August 2014, it should still be possible to explore whether the make-up of the organizations supporting British APGs or the nature of the support they provided changed during the growth period.

As noted previously, further data on the external support provided to British APGs are available in the Register of Members’ Financial Interests. Unfortunately, these data are difficult to analyse as parliamentarians are inconsistent in specifying whether the assistance that they receive results from their work with APGs. For instance, Conservative MP Sir David Amess declared £8,303.09 from the Government of the Maldives for a delegation to the country by the APPG on the Maldives from February 13-16, 2016. In contrast, Conservative MP Mark Menzies similarly declared £8,303.09 from the Government of the Maldives, but stated that the trip was a “cross-party fact-finding delegation” without mentioning the APPG. Further complicating matters is that in some cases this support is also declared on the APG registry. As a result, the analysis is limited solely to the support declared on the actual APG register to ensure consistency. However, this decision means that organizations that interface primarily with inter-country groups may be under-represented in the study.

Scottish APGs have been required to disclose external support they receive ever since the rules governing their behaviour were first created in 2000. This information was originally posted as part of the registry on the Parliament’s webpage, and webscraping software was used to capture the data available at the end of the Parliament’s first session in April 2003. However, over the following years the reporting system changed, with disclosures of external support no longer appearing directly on the register, but rather as part of each group’s annual report. As such, the second dataset for Scottish APGs reflects the information available in the most recent annual report that each group had filed as of September 2014. Given that different groups submitted their reports at somewhat different times, this means that the reporting periods may vary, but unfortunately there is no straightforward way to correct the data to ensure complete uniformity. In addition to formal declarations of secretarial support, the data for Scotland also included contributions from those external actors (either individuals or organizations) who were listed as holding the role of group “secretary.” Presumably these actors provided in-kind support to the group, but failed to meet the £500 threshold for the reporting of in-kind contributions on the formal register or annual reports.
The lack of a comprehensive APG registry in Canada meant that data regarding support from external actors had to be assembled using interviews, internet searches, the Parliament’s Hansard, and newspaper archives. Reasonably reliable data were available for the 39th Parliament (2006-2008) and the 41st Parliament (2011-2015). However, the analysis was limited to subject APGs as few details could be located on external support for Canada’s unrecognized inter-country groups. As discussed previously, such groups tend not to receive funding directly, but rather to be invited to events hosted by the partner country, making it difficult to track the funding they receive. Moreover, the declarations of travel support given by MPs on the register of sponsored travel maintained by the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner often fail to mention if the travel was undertaken independently or as part of a trip organized in partnership with an APG.

The Legislative Assembly of Ontario also lacks an APG register, and so the limitations described for the Canadian case apply there as well. In addition, the inter-country groups at the Ontario legislature are not considered as APGs for the purpose of this study since they are directed by the Speaker of the Legislature.

3.1 United Kingdom

As described in Chapter Five, the proportion of British APGs that receive any kind of external support grew slightly over the study period, rising from 62 to 68 percent between 2001 and 2014. This increase was driven exclusively by an increase in the proportion of inter-country APGs that declared external support, up from 18 to 26 percent, while the proportion of subject groups declaring such support held constant at 80 percent. Of those APGS at Westminster that reported external assistance, many received support from more than one external partner, and several partner organizations gave support to more than one APG. All told the April 2001 register captured 633 contributions to British APGs from 561 distinct actors, while the August 2014 register captured 812 contributions by 751 actors. To avoid double counting, these figures do not include the consultancies, lobby firms, and dedicated APG secretariat organizations that are funded by contributions from other actors to provide services to APGs. If such actors are included, then the number of external actors involved with APGs rise to 578 and 803 in 2001 and 2014 respectively.
Table 8.1 – Contributors to British APGs, by actor type, 2001 and 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor type</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Contributions made</td>
<td>APGs supported</td>
<td>Actors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business associations</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charities</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporations</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign governments</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government depts. and agencies</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universities</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>751</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.1 shows the breakdown of the contributions declared on the April 2001 and August 2014 registers by the type of provider. The external partners themselves were diverse, including major corporations like Pfizer, Lloyds Banking Group, and Rolls Royce, as well as domestic and international charities such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the British Heart Foundation, and the Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Many APGs at Westminster also receive assistance from associations that group together charities or corporations in the same sector, such as the Association of Medical Research Charities or Oil and Gas UK. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like the Association of Chief Police Officers or Unite the Union are also heavily engaged. Other external supporters included British government departments or agencies (including local authorities), universities, and foreign governments. Some APGs also received support from individuals who volunteered their time in a “personal capacity.” In 2001 the most active external partners were British Gas, which contributed to five different APGs, followed by PowerGen and Shell Oil, who each supported four. In 2014, the top spots went to Bristol Meyer’s Squibb, British Telecom, and Christian Aid, who each provided support to four groups.

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60 Given that some APGs received support from contributors of different types, totaling the number of groups supported by each type of actor would exceed the number of groups that actually declared external support.
In terms of the number of actors and the number of contributions made, corporations were the largest supporter of APGs in both time periods. In 2014 there were 244 corporations that made 276 separate contributions to British APGs. However, corporate support tended to be clustered among a smaller number of APGs that serve as discussion forums for broad industrial sectors, such as the *Parliamentary Internet and Communications Technology Forum*, which in 2014 received contributions from 21 different corporations. Reflecting this trend, while corporations made over 260 separate contributions in both 2001 and 2014, this support was received by just 43 and 79 groups respectively. Conversely, there is much less overlap among the assistance given by business associations, charities and NGOs, all of which actually supported more groups in both time periods. Therefore while the large number of contributions from corporations may make it appear that they are the biggest supporter of APG activities, in terms of the number of groups receiving assistance that title actually went to NGOs in 2001 and charities in 2014.

In terms of change over time, by all three measures the support provided by charities grew faster throughout the period studied than that from any other source. Indeed, given that the number of APGs in operation nearly doubled between 2001 and 2014, the proportion of groups receiving assistance from each source actually stayed constant or declined over the period, except for those supported by charities, individuals, and universities. As of 2014, nearly 30 percent of APGs received assistance from charities, up from 17 percent in 2001 and almost double the proportion receiving support from the next closest category, NGOs. However, in proportionate terms support from individuals rose even more, tripling from two to six percent of all APGs.

The contributions themselves were provided in many different ways, including:

- *Direct unconditional financial contributions* – annual grants to APGs without any specified purpose;
- *Direct financial contributions for specific purposes* – funding for specific costs, such as travel or catering;
- *Indirect financial contributions* – contributions by an external actor given through (1) dedicated independent secretariat organizations, such as the Parliamentary Committee Against Antisemitism Foundation or Policy Connect; and (2) grants to existing organizations to support their work with APGs, such as those that the UK Migrant Rights Network (a charity) receives from Unison (a union) and Fragomen LLP (a law firm) to provide the secretariat for the *APPG on Migration*;
- *In-kind provision of secretariat services* – as discussed in Chapter Five the term “secretariat services” can cover a wide range of activities, from basic group organization to the provision of funding for catering, travel, and research.
• **In-kind support for specific activities** – support given for specific costs, such as travel, catering, or printing without a specified value attached;

• **Hired support** – where an external actor hires a government relations firm to provide support to an APG.

This diversity makes it difficult to quantify the support given to APGs. Moreover, these different types of support can at times overlap. For instance, the *APPG on Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia* employs a complicated arrangement that involves both indirect and hired support. A corporation, Novartis Oncology UK, provides grants to two charities, the Sickle Cell Society and the UK Thalassaemia Society, which in turn hire a lobby firm, Political Intelligence, to provide the group’s secretariat. Novartis also paid the cost of catering at the group’s receptions. However, prior to 2015 those providing in-kind support did not need to estimate the value of the services offered, meaning that no value is given in the APG registry for any of the grants or costs incurred by Novartis. Given these constraints, including the vagueness of what is covered under the rubric of “secretariat services,” the remainder of the analysis in this section first examines those external actors who provided any contributions for which a specific value was declared, and then those that provided secretariat services, whether a financial value was declared or not.

### 3.1.1 Support with specified value

The greatest challenge faced when examining the external assistance provided to British APGs is the lack of a financial value for much of the support declared, making it very difficult to compare the resources available to each group. This problem actually became worse over time, with the proportion of contributions declared with a specified value declining in both absolute and relative terms, falling from 68 percent of the total in 2001 (430 of 633) to just 40 percent in 2014 (325 of 813). Further complicating matters is that in both years such declarations came from only a small number of APGs (just 45 and 65 respectively), a situation which results from the fact that several of these APGs operated as large stakeholder forums that charged a membership fee to each participating external actor.

This skewed distribution of those contributions for which a monetary value was provided means that such support is likely not representative of the overall nature of the external assistance received by British APGs. Nevertheless, it is still worthwhile to examine such support given that it is the only form whose extent can be precisely compared. Moreover, the total value of the
support more than doubled over the period from £826,845 to £1,935,051, suggesting that it may shed some light on the factors fueling APG growth.\textsuperscript{61}

**Figure 8.1 – Source of contributions that were declared with a specified monetary, by actor type, April 2001 and August 2014**\textsuperscript{62}

Figure 8.1 presents the number of donors of each type that were listed as making contributions with a specified monetary value. The “Others” category includes contributions by individuals, foreign governments, and dedicated foundations created specifically to support a given APG, such as the Parliamentary Christian Fellowship Trust. As can be seen, corporations made up the largest source of contributions with a specified value in both 2001 and 2014, dwarfing all other types of actors. In contrast, there were sharp reductions in the number of government departments and universities that gave funds. These declines both resulted from changes in participation in two of the mass stakeholder APGs. Specifically, in 2001 there were 69 different universities that each gave £500 to the APPG on Universities, while the Parliamentary Advisory Council on Transport Safety received contributions of £550 from 19 separate local government councils. Both sets of contributions were missing in 2014. It is not known if the support was given and simply not reported since they were each under £1,500, or if the contributions were

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\textsuperscript{61} These figures exclude the support given to the British American Parliamentary Group.

\textsuperscript{62} These figures include secretariat support for which a financial value was provided.
given to another body which then engaged with the APG on their behalf. For instance, in 2014 the sole declaration of external support by the APPG on Universities was for secretariat services from Universities UK, which is an umbrella body for the sector. These changes also reflect the disappearance of small donations from the registry over time: in 2001, APGs declared 298 contributions that were valued below £1,500; in 2014, just eight such declarations were made.

While Figure 8.1 looked at the number of actors of each type who provided contributions that were declared with a specified value, Figures 8.2 and 8.3 examine the total value of the contributions they made. Together they demonstrate that despite the increase in the total amount declared, the proportion of the contributions provided by each type of actor has been remarkably stable. Indeed, with the exception of the “Others”, the proportion of support coming from each category did not change by more than two per cent between 2001 and 2014. Businesses clearly provided the majority of the support with a specified value – particularly if the contributions from corporations themselves are combined with those from business associations. Charities were the next most significant source, providing 20 per cent of the support reported with a specified value by APGs in both time periods.

Tables 8.2 and 8.3 list the ten largest contributions with a specified value that were made in 2001 and 2014. The data show that not only has the total value of the support declared increased sharply since 2001, but so too has the size of the individual contributions, with the top four in 2014 each being at least double the value of their counterparts in 2001. The tables also show that while corporations provided the majority of financial support declared, there were still several large contributions made by individual charities and other non-corporate actors. Indeed in 2001, the largest individual contribution with a specified monetary value was the £40,000 given by the Shirley Foundation to the APPG on Autism, while in 2014 it was the £80,000 from the estate of Mrs Cynthia Campbell-Savours given to the APPG on Human Rights. Moreover, just two of the 10 largest contributions in 2014 were actually from corporations, with the remainder coming from charities, international bodies, NGOs, and the British government.
Figure 8.2 – Total worth of contributions with a specified monetary value declared by British APGs, by actor type, April 2001

- Charities, £169,433, 20%
- Business associations, £67,264, 8%
- Corporations, £455,343, 55%
- Others, £17,500, 2%
- NGOs, £58,319, 7%
- Governments, £26,272, 3%
- Universities, £37,514, 5%
- Corporations, £1,048,693, 54%
- Others, £113,617, 6%
- NGOs, £174,085, 9%
- Universities, £56,790, 3%
- Others, £113,617, 6%
- Business associations, £113,412, 6%
- Governments, £48,200, 2%
- Charities, £380,254, 20%
- Governments, £48,200, 2%
- NGOs, £174,085, 9%
- Universities, £56,790, 3%
- Others, £113,617, 6%
- Business associations, £113,412, 6%
- Corporations, £1,048,693, 54%

Total worth of contributions with a specified monetary value declared by British APGs, by actor type, April 2001.

- Charities, £380,254
- Business associations, £113,412
- Corporations, £1,048,693
- Others, £113,617
- NGOs, £174,085
- Universities, £56,790
- Governments, £48,200

Total worth of contributions with a specified monetary value declared by British APGs, by actor type, August 2014.
Table 8.2 – Ten largest contributions with a specified monetary value declared on the April 2001 APG registry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Donor</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shirley Foundation</td>
<td>Charity</td>
<td>APPG on Autism</td>
<td>£40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Windpower</td>
<td>Corp.</td>
<td>APPG on Renewable and Sustainable Energy</td>
<td>£30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Nations Population Fund</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>APPG on Population, Development and Reproductive Health</td>
<td>£24,212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kodak</td>
<td>Corp.</td>
<td>APPG on Breast Cancer</td>
<td>£20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GKN plc</td>
<td>Corp.</td>
<td>APPG for Italy</td>
<td>£20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Aid</td>
<td>Charity</td>
<td>APPG on the African Great Lakes Region</td>
<td>£17,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Rowntree Foundation</td>
<td>Charity</td>
<td>APPG on Homelessness and Housing Need</td>
<td>£16,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Telecom</td>
<td>Corp.</td>
<td>Parliamentary Choir</td>
<td>£15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Med, Total Oil, Volvo Cars</td>
<td>Corp.</td>
<td>Parliamentary Advisory Council on Transport Safety each</td>
<td>£12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrow Cadbury Trust</td>
<td>Charity</td>
<td>APPG on Penal Affairs</td>
<td>£12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrow Cadbury Trust</td>
<td>Charity</td>
<td>APPG on Human Rights</td>
<td>£12,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Five contributions tied for the ninth to thirteenth largest contributions at £12,000.

Table 8.3 – Ten largest contributions with a specified monetary value declared on the August 2014 APG registry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Donor</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estate of Mrs. Cynthia Campbell-Savours</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>APPG on Human Rights</td>
<td>£80,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Telecom</td>
<td>Corp.</td>
<td>Parliamentary Choir</td>
<td>£65,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Grid</td>
<td>Corp.</td>
<td>All-Party Parliamentary Football Club Group</td>
<td>£50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Nations Population Fund</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>APPG on Population, Development and Reproductive Health</td>
<td>£41,085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrow Cadbury Trust</td>
<td>Charity</td>
<td>APPG on Human Rights</td>
<td>£32,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign and Commonwealth Office</td>
<td>Gov.</td>
<td>APPG on Abolition of the Death Penalty</td>
<td>£31,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Society Foundation</td>
<td>Charity</td>
<td>APPG on Drug Policy Reform</td>
<td>£29,987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrow Cadbury Trust</td>
<td>Charity</td>
<td>APPG on Penal Affairs</td>
<td>£26,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Association of Dermatologists</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>APPG on Skin</td>
<td>£25,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

63
In addition, given that there were far more corporations than charities that made contributions with a specified monetary value, the average financing provided per contribution from a charity was actually higher in both 2001 and 2014 (£3,850 and £7,456 respectively) than was the case for corporations (£2,148 and £5,296 respectively). Once again, this distribution reflects the fact that corporate contributions tended to take the form of membership fees paid to those APGs that function as stakeholder forums. Thus, while there were fewer charities that provided support to APGs with a specified monetary value, and the total value of that support was much lower than for corporations, those APGs that did receive charity funding tended to receive substantial amounts. When combined with the fact that the APGs supported by charities tend to have no other sponsor organizations, this trend suggests that individual charities likely have more influence on APG behaviour than their corporate counterparts.

Nonetheless, Tables 8.2 and 8.3 also capture the fact that some corporations gave large contributions to APGs that were wholly unrelated to their own areas of activity. Most notable is the support from British Telecom (BT) for the Parliamentary Choir, which more than quadrupled from £15,000 to £65,000 from 2001 to 2014. The group primarily exists for the enjoyment of parliamentarians, with its stated purpose being “To enable Members of both Houses and staff within Parliament who enjoy choral singing to do so on a regular basis; to provide support and encouragement to young musicians at the start of their professional careers; and to organise public and private concerts for the choir” (United Kingdom. Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, 2014). As such, BT’s support for the group provides no evident benefit beyond ensuring positive brand recognition among parliamentarians. Much the same appears to be true of the £50,000 given by National Grid (an electricity and gas utility company) for the All-Party Parliamentary Football Club Group. The group’s declaration in the registry states that £35,000 of the support received are given to charity. However, the arrangement still allows parliamentarians the benefit of appearing magnanimous in donating the funds rather than if National Grid provided them directly to recipient charities.

3.1.2 Secretarial support

As discussed above, declarations of secretariat support often provide little detail regarding the services that external actors actually provide to APGs. Some receive only basic support, such as the circulation of notices of meetings; others enjoy dedicated staff who provide logistical,
research, and communications assistance. Yet despite such inconsistencies, it still remains useful to examine the secretariat support received by APGs, not least since such assistance is seen as vital for group formation and operation over the longer term. Tracking what types of external actors provide secretariat services may therefore shed light on the factors that are contributing to APG growth.

**Figure 8.4 – Declarations of secretariat support by British APGs, by provider type, April 2001 and August 2014**

In 2001, there were 166 British APGs that reported having secretariat support from one or more organizations. By 2014, that figure had more than doubled to 386. However, while the previous section revealed that there had been few changes in the composition of the organizations providing support with a specified monetary, there have been massive changes in the make-up of those organizations that provide secretariat services. Figure 8.4 breaks down the provision of secretariat support by donor type. As can be seen, there have been very large spikes in the number of group secretariats that are provided by charities, lobby firms, and individuals. These increases have altered the proportion of secretariat services coming from each source, with the percentage of secretariats provided by charities increasing from 25 to 35 percent between 2001

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64 Some UK APGs receive secretariat support from multiple organizations, meaning that number of organizations providing secretariat support exceeds the number of APGs declaring the receipt of such support.
and 2014, and that for lobby firms rising from 12 to 16 per cent. In contrast, the proportion of secretariats furnished by corporations fell from eight per cent to five.

Most external partners in the UK provide their assistance directly to APGs. However, as noted in Chapter Five, a minority hire lobby firms to deliver support on their behalf. The number of APGs receiving secretarial services from lobby firms more than tripled from 21 to 66 between 2001 and 2014. Remarkably, despite the ongoing concern about the use of British APGs as tools for inappropriate lobbying, on the August 2014 register there were 14 APGs that received secretariat services from lobby firms without clearly specifying on whose behalf the support was provided as required by the Parliament’s rules for APGs. Ironically, this included the APPG on Corporate Responsibility, whose registry entry stated only that “Central Lobby Consultants (a consultancy) provides the secretariat for the group and is paid by the group to do so” (United Kingdom. Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, 2014: 256). Others lacking details on lobbyist funding included the APPGs for Bahrain, Clinical Physiology, the Environment, Genital Mutilation, Pakistan, Rail, and Rowing. Those that did disclose the source of lobbyist support were similarly diverse, and included the APPGs on Aviation, Bingo, and Atrial Fibrillation. The majority of these lobbyist-assisted groups were funded by corporations or business associations, including several that acted as stakeholder forums, with a large number of actors each paying membership fees to the lobby firm that in turn operated the secretariat. For instance, the APPG on Unconventional Oil and Gas received “associate membership fees” of between £1,000 and £8,000 from 41 different corporations that were used to pay for the services of Hill and Knowlton Strategies.

A further 13 APGs in 2014 received their secretariat support from independent secretariat organizations (ISO), a modest increase from five in 2001. These groups also tended to be large stakeholder-supported forums for a given industry or sector, with the ISO being funded by membership fees from the external actors involved. However, while some groups declared the sources of funding for the ISO, others did not. The Parliamentary Renewable and Sustainable Energy Group (PRASEG) received secretariat support from PRASEG Ltd, a not-for-profit company that was purpose built to support the group. Yet while the group’s website listed dozens of external actors as members, no details were declared on the register regarding the external support that they provide. The same was true of the APPG on Skills and Employment, which received secretariat services from Policy Connect.
In terms of the distribution of secretariat support, most charities serve as the secretariat to a single APG. In fact in 2014 there was just one charity, RESULTS UK, which operated the secretariat of more than one group (the APPGs for *Global Education for All, Microfinance, and Tuberculosis*). In contrast, as of 2014 there were five consultancies that each provided the secretariat for three APGs, and one (the Whitehouse Consultancy) that provided the secretariat for four different groups. This trend suggests that the creation of APGs has become part of the standard package that lobby firms offer to their clients.

This review of the external support declared by British APGs reveals that different types of actors engage with APGs in different ways. Corporations provide the bulk of those contributions that are declared with a specified monetary value. However, corporate support tends to be focused on a smaller number of groups. By comparison, there is little overlap in the assistance offered by charities, and so it was received by a much larger number of groups. Between 2001 and 2014 charities moved past NGOs to become the top source of external assistance for British APGs in terms of the number of groups supported. Charities also became the leading supplier of secretariat services, supporting more APGs than corporations and business associations combined. All told, the jump in the number of APGs operating in the UK between 2001 and 2014 appears to have been driven to a substantial degree by an increase in support from charities.

### 3.2 Scotland

Unlike their British cousins, the APGs at the Scottish Parliament have always been required not only to declare the value of the direct financial support they receive, but also to estimate the value of in-kind support as well. When combined with a lower reporting threshold of £500, these rules should theoretically make it possible to get a more complete picture of the support provided to the APGs at Holyrood. Unfortunately, fewer than half of all groups actually made declarations of external assistance in 2014. Yet of those that did not, all but two listed an outside actor as the group secretary or secretariat, implying that the group received external support, but that the cost of the services provided was not enough to trigger a formal declaration in the APG register or on their annual report. If these external secretaries are included then 82 percent of Scottish APGs in 2003 and 98 percent of those in 2014 had at least some measure of external assistance.

It is doubtful that each of these external providers failed to reach the threshold at which a declaration of report would be required. For instance, among those groups that did declare
external support, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA), which provides the secretariat to the *CPG on Accident Prevention And Safety Awareness*, estimated that the daily cost of support from one of its staff members was £272. This figure was “worked out by including all the costs to ROSPA involved in employing the staff member such as: salary, national insurance, car allowance, heating, lighting, rent (and other office costs etc) as well as central admin services (eg accounts, IT, HR, website, information centre etc)” (Cross-Party Group on Accident Prevention and Safety Awareness, 2014). It then estimated that two days’ work was required for each meeting of the APG, resulting in it breaching the reporting threshold after just one session. Given that several of the groups that declared no external support held three or more meetings per year, it would seem likely that at least some would have crossed the reporting line if they were as comprehensive in estimating their costs as the ROSPA.

In the end, this pattern for the disclosure of external support in Scotland leaves us in largely the same situation that we found in the UK: a minority of Scottish APGs have declared support with a specified monetary value, while the majority note only that in-kind secretarial support was provided. As such, this section proceeds in the same fashion, examining those declarations of keep with a financial value and then turning to those of secretariat assistance. However, it first provides a brief overview of all outside contributions received by APGs at Holyrood.

Table 8.4 breaks down the support provided to Scottish APGs by provider type. Compared to the UK, the external support provided to Scottish APGs is much less complicated, with each external actor generally supporting just one group, and each group generally receiving assistance from a single external actor. While there were equal numbers of contributions from corporations and charities in 2003, the concentration of corporate support in the *CPG of Cancer* (10 of 17 contributions) meant that charities were by far the largest provider of external assistance in terms of the number of groups supported. By 2014 charities had secured the lead in all categories, with far more actors involved, contributions made, and groups assisted than any other type of actor. The proportion of Scottish APGs receiving at least some external assistance from a charity also rose from 33 percent to 39 percent over the period. NGOs were the second largest source of assistance in both years, although the proportion receiving NGO support fell from 24 percent to 19 percent from 2003 to 2014. As with Westminster, Holyrood also saw a large jump in support over the period from individuals acting in a personal capacity. As of 2014, nearly one in five groups received assistance from an individual, all of whom acted as group secretaries.
Table 8.4 – Contributors to Scottish APGs, by type, 2003 and 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor type</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Contributions declared</td>
<td>APGs supported</td>
<td>Actors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business associations</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4 (8%)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charities</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16 (33%)</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporations</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7 (14%)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign governments</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government depts. and agencies</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4 (8%)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12 (24%)</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universities</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Together these changes meant that contributions from the corporate sector (either individual corporations or business associations) dropped from a third of the total in 2003 to just 17 percent in 2014. As such, the growth of APGs at Holyrood would appear to have been fuelled to a much greater extent by charities and other not-for-profit actors than by business interests.

3.2.1 Support with a specified monetary value

In contrast to Westminster, the number of external contributions with a specified value declared by Scottish APGs increased over the period studied, rising nearly 50 percent from 42 to 60. However, Scottish APGs have not witnessed the jump in funding seen in the UK, with the total worth of the assistance declared with specified value instead creeping up only marginally from £83,364 to £101,904 between 2003 and 2014. Given that the number of APGs in operation rose from 49 to 88 over this period, the average value of such support per APG actually fell considerably.

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65 Includes those listed as group secretaries even if a declaration of support was not posted in the registry. Given that some APGs received support from contributors of different types, totaling the number of groups supported by each type of actor would exceed the number of groups that actually declared external support.
Figure 8.5 presents the source of those contributions that were declared with a specified value in both 2003 and 2014. Corporations were the largest source of such assistance in the first period, with charities coming second. Yet by 2014 the number of corporate contributions had plummeted, moving charities into the top spot, while a spike in contributions from NGOs moved them into second. Remarkably, the drop in corporate contributions in 2014 resulted almost entirely from the absence of any declarations of support from the corporations that had sponsored the “Scotland Against Cancer” conference operated by the *CPG on Cancer*: while the group declared £17,600 from 10 pharmaceutical companies for the conference in 2003, no funding at all was declared in 2014. However, this absence did not indicate that the contributions were not made. Instead, as discussed in Chapter Five, the conference report listed several corporate sponsors, but their support was not included in the group’s annual report. This situation reveals a lack of clarity regarding when an event sponsored by an APG is in fact an APG event. It also demonstrates that trends in APG financing support in smaller legislatures may be skewed by the assistance received by just one or two groups.

Figure 8.5 – Source of contributions declared with a specified monetary, by actor type, April 2003 and September 2014

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66 The fact that some organizations contribute to multiple APGs means that the number of organizations making financial contributors is lower than the number of contributions made. The figures also include secretariat support for which a financial value was provided.
Figure 8.6 – Total worth of contributions with a specified monetary value declared by Scottish APGs, by actor type, April 2003

Figure 8.7 – Total worth of contributions with a specified monetary value declared by Scottish APGs, by actor type, September 2014
The total worth of those contributions declared with a specified value is explored in Figures 8.6 and 8.7. In contrast to the UK, they show that the proportion of support received from each actor type changed substantially over time. In 2003, corporations were the largest source of contributions with a specified value, providing nearly £30,000 in support for over a third of the total received. However, by 2014 corporations together provided just £5,450, a mere five percent of the total. At the same time the combined worth of those contributions with a specified value given by charities rose to over £40,000 in 2014, making it the largest provider of such assistance in terms of both the number of contributions and absolute value as well. There was also considerable growth in the proportion of support coming from NGOs and business associations, although the largest increase was actually among universities, which made no contributions of any sort in 2003, but account for nine percent of all contributions with a specified value in 2014. Once again, these findings suggest that charities and other not-for-profits have been the main drivers of APG expansion at Holyrood.

Tables 8.5 and 8.6 provide further context for these trends by presenting the 10 largest contributions with a specified value declared by Scottish APGs in April 2003 and September 2014. Compared to their British equivalents presented above, the contributions listed stand out for their comparatively small size. In fact, each of the three largest contributions with a specified value declared by British APGs in 2014 is worth more than all of the 10 largest contributions declared by Scottish APGs from the same year combined. Moreover, while the value of the largest contributions received by British APGs generally doubled from 2001 to 2014, those for Scottish groups remained largely constant. This gap would appear to reflect the more modest objectives activities of Scottish APGs, which generally serve primarily as forums for discussion rather than policy advocacy, and so do not require extensive resources for events, research, or communications. Also, unlike Westminster, there were also no instances of corporations giving support to APGs that exist for the enjoyment of members. However, in 2003 the largest corporate contribution declared by any APG – £6,500 from United Distillers to the CPG on Learning Disability – appears to have been given on a charitable basis rather than for any connection to the firm’s commercial interests.
Table 8.5 – Ten largest contributions of external support declared on the Scottish APG register as of April 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Donor</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Consumer Council</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>CPG on Consumer Issues</td>
<td>£7,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action on Smoking and Health Scotland</td>
<td>Charity</td>
<td>CPG on Tobacco and Health</td>
<td>£6,927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Distillers</td>
<td>Corporation</td>
<td>CPG on Learning Disability</td>
<td>£6,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action for M.E.</td>
<td>Charity</td>
<td>CPG on M.E.</td>
<td>£6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK Offshore Operators Association</td>
<td>Business Association</td>
<td>CPG on Oil And Gas</td>
<td>£4,569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancer Research UK</td>
<td>Charity</td>
<td>CPG on Cancer</td>
<td>£4,120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eli Lilly and Company Limited</td>
<td>Corporation</td>
<td>CPG on Visual Impairment</td>
<td>£4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children in Scotland</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>CPG on Children And Young People</td>
<td>£3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mencap City Foundation</td>
<td>Charity</td>
<td>CPG on Learning Disability</td>
<td>£3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astra Zeneca, Aventis, Lilly Oncology, Sanofi-Synthelabo</td>
<td>Corporations</td>
<td>CPG on Cancer</td>
<td>£2,600 each</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Four contributions tied for the tenth to thirteenth largest contributions at £2,600.

Table 8.6 – Ten largest contributions of external support declared on the most recent annual reports submitted by Scottish APGs available as of September 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Donor</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scotland’s Rural College</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>CPG on Rural Policy</td>
<td>£8,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland’s Learning Partnership</td>
<td>Charity</td>
<td>CPG on Adult Learning</td>
<td>£6,268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genetic Alliance UK</td>
<td>Charity</td>
<td>CPG on Rare Diseases</td>
<td>£5,952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal National Institute for the Blind Scotland</td>
<td>Charity</td>
<td>CPG on Visual Impairment</td>
<td>£5,876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Association of Funeral Directors</td>
<td>Business association</td>
<td>CPG on Funerals And Bereavement</td>
<td>£5,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Younghlink Scotland</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>CPG on Children And Young People</td>
<td>£5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Council on Deafness</td>
<td>Charity</td>
<td>CPG on Deafness</td>
<td>£3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lloyds Banking Group</td>
<td>Corporation</td>
<td>CPG on Scottish Economy</td>
<td>£2,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children in Scotland</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>CPG on Children And Young People</td>
<td>£2,770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association of British Credit Unions</td>
<td>Business association</td>
<td>CPG on Credit Unions</td>
<td>£2,515</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Charities were the largest single source of the ten largest contributions declared in both 2003 and 2014, but in neither year did they compose a majority of the providers, and they did not top...
either list. Instead, the largest single contributions respectively came from an NGO and a university research group. Nonetheless, the lists largely reflect the distribution of support displayed in figures 8.6 and 8.7, and in particular illustrate the decline of support from corporations, which provided six of the ten largest contributions with a specified value declared in 2003 (there was a four-way tie for tenth spot), but just one of those in 2014.

3.2.2 Secretarial support

As described above, secretariat support is the most frequent type of external assistance received by Scottish APGs. In 2003, 76 percent of the APGs at Holyrood had an external secretariat provider; by 2014 it was 92 percent. Such support is provided in largely the same way as at Westminster, with organizations that serve as a secretariat being likely not only to organize group meetings and maintain minutes, but also to provide refreshments at group meetings and meet any other costs that might be incurred.

Figure 8.8 displays the provision of secretariat support by donor type. As can be seen, charities were the most common secretariat providers in both 2003 and 2014, followed by NGOs. In keeping with the trends at Westminster, 2014 also saw a large jump in the number of APGs at Holyrood receiving secretariat services from individuals who volunteer their time, moving that source into third place ahead of business associations. However, unlike Westminster, there was just one group in 2014, the *CPG on Funerals and Bereavement*, whose secretariat was provided by a lobby firm. Moreover, the source of the funding (the National Association of Funeral Directors) was clearly declared in the registry. Of the seven groups in 2014 that did not declare an external secretariat, four listed staff in the office of their convenor as the secretariat provider.

This pattern of secretariat support further underscores the role of charities and other not-for-profits as the primary enabler of APG activity at Holyrood. By 2014 charities alone made up over 40 percent of the external secretariat providers for Scottish APGs – a figure roughly equivalent to the proportion of external support with a specified value that they contributed. NGOs and individuals together accounted for a further third of secretariat organizations, while corporations and business associations made up just 13 percent, a level largely unchanged since 2003. By comparison corporations and business associations made up 19 percent of secretariat providers in the UK – a figure that grows larger when it is considered that many corporations and associations provide their assistance indirectly via lobby firms.
Overall, it seems safe to conclude that business interests are even less engaged with APGs in Scotland than they are in the UK, and that what engagement there is has declined over time. There are several potential explanations for these trends. Scottish corporations may be reluctant to participate in the APGs at Holyrood given that they are fully open to civil society organizations, which may be skeptical of their agendas. As noted in Chapter Two, new Scottish APGs also must be approved by the Parliament’s Standards Committee, potentially limiting the formation of some groups that would largely represent the interests of corporations. Indeed, when developing the Parliament’s original regulations for APGs, MSPs specifically spoke about the desire to prevent the creation of such corporate driven groups. At the same time, one civil society lobbyist suggested that the smaller scale of the Scottish Parliament and Scottish government could mean that MSPs and ministers are more accessible to corporate interests, reducing the utility of APGs as tools of government relations relative to Westminster (confidential interview, December 2012). One MSP also suggested that corporations are not as engaged in Scottish APGs simply because the Scottish government lacks control over many of the tools that can shape the business environment in the country. As he stated:

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68 Some Scottish APGs receive secretariat support from multiple organizations, meaning that number of organizations contributing secretariat support exceeds the number of APGs with defined secretariats.
It may just be because we’re a devolved Parliament and corporate lobbying is less of a serious problem here than it is at Westminster, certainly less than it is in Brussels, which is just a massive lobbying machine in many ways. It might be that if we gain more economic powers, for example that would become a bigger problem. It’s an issue that we’re aware of and I don’t think it’s one that’s disproportionate or difficult to handle at the moment (confidential interview, November 2012).

3.3 Canada

Compared to Britain and Scotland, far less information is available regarding the external actors who support the APGs at the Canadian Parliament or the nature of the assistance that they provide. However, drawing on media reports, web searches, parliamentary records, and other sources, it was possible to identify a range of actors that provided at least some assistance to Canada’s APGs. The results of this research are summarized in Table 8.7. Unfortunately it was generally not possible to quantify this support, meaning that the data likely conflate both large and small contributions. It is also entirely possible that external assistance was received by other groups as well. The lack of a registry indicating the precise timing of contributions also means that the information is provided by parliamentary session rather than for a specific point in time. Nonetheless, the information gathered at least gives us a starting point to explore the assistance received by Canadian APGs.

Table 8.7 – Overview of external support identified for Canadian subject-focused APGs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of subject APGs active</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of subject APGs found to receive external support</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of external partners identified</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in Table 8.7, the number subject-focused APGs at the Canadian Parliament found to be receiving external assistance and the number of external actors found to be providing both more than doubled between the 39th and 41st Parliaments. Figure 8.9 presents a breakdown of these actors by organization type, revealing that business associations were the largest source of external support in the 39th Parliament, but were overtaken by charities in the 41st Parliament. There was also significant growth in the number of NGOs supporting APGs, meaning that not-
for-profit actors were by far the largest providers of external assistance to Canadian APGs by the end of the period studied.

As was the case with Scottish APGs, all but two Canadian APGs had just one external partner, and there was no external partner found to have supported multiple groups. Of those with multiple partners, the Parliamentary Outdoors Caucus had the most, and in the 41\textsuperscript{st} Parliament it received assistance from the Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association, the Canadian Sporting Arms and Ammunition Association, the Fur Institute of Canada, and the Canadian Sport Shooting Association, and the Outdoors Caucus Association of Canada. While the first three organizations are all business associations, the fourth is an NGO, and the fifth is an independent secretariat organization that was created in 2007 to support the work of the Outdoors Caucus. More research is needed to explore how the Outdoors Caucus Association is funded and the extent to which it is independent from its sponsor organizations. The Parliamentary HIV/AIDS and TB Caucus came a close second with support from four actors, all of which are charities: the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network, Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development, and Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada.

Figure 8.9 – External organizations supporting subject-focused APGs in Canada, by actor type, 39\textsuperscript{th} (2006-2008) and 41\textsuperscript{st} (2011-2015) Parliaments

While any findings regarding APGs in Canada must be more tentative due to the lack of a complete registry, the subject focused groups in Ottawa do appear to be following the same
trends as those in the UK and Scotland, with charitable and not-for-profit organizations now providing the bulk of the external assistance received. Moreover, it is remarkable that no Canadian APG appears to receive support directly from a corporation. However, these findings may change if future research is extended to include inter-country APGs, which at times receive support from corporations for either travel or hospitality expenses.

### 3.4 Ontario

Table 8.8 reviews the external actors who support the APGs at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, finding that each group except for the Trent Severn Caucus has an external partner. The small number of groups makes it impossible to draw any definitive conclusions. Nonetheless, in keeping with the Canadian case, none of the groups is directly supported by an individual corporation, and the overall balance of external support (one business association to two charities) is consistent with that in the other jurisdictions. Therefore while the Ontario case cannot be used to confirm the broader trend, at least it does not run counter to it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Partner (s)</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cement Caucus</td>
<td>Cement Association of Canada</td>
<td>Business association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lung Health Caucus</td>
<td>Ontario Lung Association</td>
<td>Charity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trent Severn Caucus</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All-Party Cycling Caucus</td>
<td>Shared the Road Coalition, Brown and Cohen Public Affairs</td>
<td>Charity, Lobby firm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The All-Party Cycling Caucus also is also the only APG in either Canada or Ontario that received external support from a government relations firm. Brown and Cohen Public Affairs worked with the Share the Road Coalition, a cycling advocacy group, to create the caucus as part of a broader government relations campaign. Other elements of the plan included developing an “Ontario Cycling Advocacy Network” and advocacy toolkit to help the group’s grassroots members to engage with MPPs, and the establishment of an annual “Ontario Bike Summit” at Queen’s Park each year, which brings together legislators and advocates. The campaign thus worked both to increase cycling community’s capacity to lobby elected officials while also creating the All-Party Cycling Caucus and the Bike Summit to the focal points of the lobbying
efforts. Brown and Cohen won a Silver Award for Government Relations from the Canadian Public Relations Society for the overall campaign.

4 Reasons for participation

It is clear from the discussion above that the make-up of the actors that support APGs has changed over time, and that different types of actors tend to provide assistance in different ways. These findings raise questions as to whether the motivation for supporting APGs may vary across different types of actors. It also draws attention to how the kinds of activities carried out by APGs fit with the broader government relations strategies and objectives that external actors pursue. For instance, most corporate actors seek to influence policy and legislative decisions to create an environment that is conducive to the growth of their businesses. By comparison most charities seek to influence policy in pursuit of what they consider to be a public good, however defined. While both corporations and charities may employ professional lobbyists, the latter often rely on mobilizing grassroots supporters to pressure elected politicians. All told, these varying goals and approaches create different opportunities for engagement with APGs, and hence would appear to provide varying incentives for supporting their activities.

This section explores the major factors that prompt external actors to support APGs. It demonstrates that some seek to build relationships and raise policy awareness among parliamentarians over the long term, while others actors hope to transform parliamentarians into internal champions who will endorse their policy positions and pursue them through direct legislative advocacy or by engaging with ministers. In either case, actors frequently become inspired to support APGs after seeing the success of those groups supported by other organizations, and especially their competitors. More broadly, in recent years supporting an APG has also become accepted as a standard lobbying tactic alongside holding receptions or writing to ministers, with the result that some actors choose to provide assistance to APGs because they feel that it is something that organizations like theirs should do. However, different types of organizations face different considerations when choosing whether to become involved with APGs. Groups aided by charities, NGOs or other not for profits generally face much less media scrutiny of their actions, and so tend to be much more assertive in pursuing policy objectives, thereby increasing the potential return to the organizations on the support they provide. In
contrast, APGs supported by corporations are regularly singled out for public criticism, limiting the range of advocacy they can undertake.

4.1 Long-term relationship building and advocacy

Whether openly stated or not, influencing policy and legislative decisions is a major objective for many APGs and the actors that support them. However, in keeping with the literature from the UK, respondents from each jurisdiction stressed that APGs are more useful as a tool for building relationships and influencing the views of parliamentarians over the longer-term rather than for short-term advocacy on urgent issues. Indeed, the description of the external advocacy conducted via APGs given by a consultant lobbyist in Canada closely mirrored Barker and Rush’s (1970) depiction of APGs as part of the “regular contacts” approach to lobbying:

It's more on the relationship basis. What the groups are hoping, whether they're industry-based or cause-based, is that they will have this group of MPs loosely categorized as the "insert name or cause here" caucus. They will then continually get information from the organization from the industry and then hopefully when it comes budget time or anything else, that they're making a submission before the Finance Committee. They'll say "I know these guys and that's worthwhile" or "did you know that this contributes x millions of dollars to this riding." So it's that - it's more subtle (confidential interview, December 2013).

Conversely, a British consultant lobbyist stressed the limits of APGs for dealing with short-term problems:

If you’ve got particularly something which is quite… urgent I guess I would say, just getting an APPG into action would take a month of emails. It’s far better to organize something quick and invite MPs along, and hope that you get a decent spread. If you’ve got something where, you know, that morning you read that [the government] are going to [make a major policy change], well you would obviously be wheeling out your chief executive and your media directors quickly and hopefully getting people on the news and writing letters to The Times and all of the classic stuff you would do as part of your media strategy. And when you’re looking at what you do from a parliamentary perspective, well write to the MPs that you know are interested, try and get meetings where you can. And if you’ve got the resources, try and get a briefing that week. Way more effective than holding an APPG meeting (confidential interview, October 2012).

In this scenario, the MPs contacted by the external actors would typically be the APG members as they would already be primed with both a knowledge of the issue and a sympathy for the cause. However, given the pressure on parliamentarians’ schedules, trying to arrange a formal
APG meeting on short-notice would be extraordinarily challenging, especially given the requirement at both Westminster and Holyrood for groups to give advance notice of meetings.

Respondents also stressed that building long-term relationships with parliamentarians through APGs was an effective way to ensure that policy issues and the stakeholders who supported them were seen to be non-partisan. This perception of cross-party support and cooperation was seen to be useful not only given that the party in power at any given point would eventually lose office, but also to pave the way for policy victories in the medium term. In contrast to typical perceptions regarding the ability of majority governments to easily pursue their agendas, those interviewed argued that policy change was easier if all parties agreed as it required less political capital from the government. As one lobbyist with a Canadian business association put it:

Well, part of what changes public policy is when you have enough legislators whether it’s among all parties, or the governing party, that agree that the change is needed. Could you achieve your goals without it? Maybe, probably. Not always though. So it certainly doesn’t hurt to have a group of MPs who understand what you’re trying to do, and why you are trying to do it and by when you’re trying to get it done… In a minority government, you’ve got to convince at least two parties that’s good policy. In a majority government, it’s less critical to have opposition support, but it never hurts. The government would prefer to have opposition support for a number of things (confidential interview, December 2013).

In this way, using an APG to build long-term awareness of a policy issue across party lines can increase the likelihood that lobbying initiatives targeting the executive will be successful.

A number of respondents noted that external actors chose to support such long-term awareness raising efforts after being adversely affected by past policy decisions. For instance, the Wood Panel Industries Federation drove the creation of the APPG on the Wood Panel Industry at Westminster after a number of policy changes, including the diversion of wood material to biomass energy plants, threatened the supply of raw materials for the industry. The group regularly brings together parliamentarians, and especially those with wood paneling factories in their constituencies, to keep them updated on “the effect of recent legislation on the industry, Government consultations and the contribution that the industry can make both to the environment and the economy” (Wood Panel Industries Federation, 2015). In Canada, the National Association of Friendship Centres started the Friendship Centres Caucus to raise awareness about their work among MPs after failing to secure stable long-term funding.
External actors in Canada also noted that APG meetings were a less burdensome way to maintain long-term relationships with parliamentarians given that any discussions held there did not need to be reported on the lobbying register. As one described,

So it's a bit under the radar in that way. You don't have to report that to the lobbying [commissioner]. None of that is lobbying. None of the other caucus work is lobbying. It's an event. When you hold an event it doesn't count as lobbying, under the rules as far as I understand them. And we've never reported it. In the context of an event you can do and say whatever you want because it's not...lobbying is very specific. You have to set up a time with somebody, it has to be about a certain subject and you have to lobby to change legislation. You have to have ideas or you have to be pushing on changing legislation. But if you bump into an MP on a sidewalk or if you bump into them at an event it's not lobbying. You can say whatever you want (confidential interview, November 2013).

Once created, such relationships can facilitate other government relations initiatives conducted by the external actors, and even secure opportunities to contribute to formal parliamentary proceedings. For instance, in 2012 members of the Juvenile Diabetes Caucus arranged for young diabetes patients who were in Ottawa as part of a “lobby day” for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation to appear at the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health (Burgess, 2012).

Such long-term relationship building is also employed by the foreign governments and other external actors that support inter-country APGs, although with the key difference that such relationships are often built on the provision of travel to the country in question. While there are dozens of parliamentarians in the UK, Canada, and to a lesser extent Scotland, who accept such travel, a focus on one, former Canadian Conservative MP Patrick Brown, can be helpful to show the extent of the relationships that form. Brown was elected Chair of the Canada-India Parliamentary Association in 2007. Between 2009 (the first year that online reports were made available) and 2014, he declared over $12,500 in sponsored travel for trips to India, paid for by Canada-India Foundation, Canadian Friends of Gujarat, the Government of Gujarat, and the Gujarat Business Association (Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, 2014). Moreover, given that the disclosed costs typically do not include food and transportation in the country, the benefits received may be greater than was stated.

It is not known to what extent Mr. Brown raised the issues discussed on these trips with his parliamentary colleagues. However, in a 2008 op-ed in The Embassy, a foreign-policy newspaper, Mr. Brown urged the Canadian government to pursue an economic co-operation
agreement with India, facilitate travel for Indian tourists, and increase partnerships between Indian and Canadian universities. More significantly, he also called for Canada to “move beyond our knee-jerk reaction to India as a nuclear power… towards signing a comprehensive nuclear co-operation agreement to help ensure clean energy can be delivered to 1/6 of the world's population” (Brown, 2008). Whether or not as a result of Mr. Brown’s efforts, in 2009 Canada and India announced a joint study on the possibilities for a comprehensive economic agreement, with formal negotiations beginning the following year (Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Development Canada, 2014). In 2010, Canada and India also negotiated an agreement on nuclear cooperation (Curry, 2010).

Mr. Brown also showed his dedication to India, and particularly to the state of Gujarat, in 2009 when he went “to meet and support” Narendra Modi, Gujarat’s Chief Minister, despite being “instructed by Foreign Affairs not go” (Gujaratis for Patrick, 2015). At the time Mr. Modi, who is now Prime Minister of India, was facing legal action pertaining to allegations that he had failed to take sufficient action to stop anti-Muslim riots. Brown has since remained in close touch with Modi, and even “arranged for Canada to co-sponsor” trade conferences in Gujarat that Modi organized in 2011 and 2013 (Gujaratis for Patrick, 2015). However, the relationship has not been solely one-sided. In addition to the travel mentioned above, in 2011 Modi gave Brown honorary citizenship in Gujarat. When Brown moved to run for the leadership of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party in 2014, a group of Gujarati Canadians calling themselves “Gujaratis for Patrick” formed to help his campaign (Gujaratis for Patrick, 2015). Moreover, Modi himself visited Canada and appeared at a rally for Brown in April 2015 shortly before the leadership vote (Taber, 2015). Observers predicted that such connections with the Indian diaspora community “could be a big advantage” for his campaign (Radwanski, 2014), and Brown went on to win the race by a large margin.

In addition to his work on India, Brown also declared $2,000 in travel support from the Dutch government for travel with the Canada-Netherlands Friendship Group, and $2,400 from the Canada-Vietnam Association for a trip in his role as Chair of the Canada-Vietnam Friendship Group. While Mr. Brown may be an extreme case, the fact he is just one of dozens of Canadian MPs to accept sponsored travel (a total of 109 sponsored trips were taken by MPs in 2013 alone) suggests that long-term advocacy via inter-country APGs remains alive and well, and is now being employed by a more diverse range of countries than in past (Smith, 2014). Much the same
could also be said at Westminster, where many MPs also undertake sponsored travel through inter-country APGs each year.

4.2 Developing internal advocates

Some external actors choose to support APGs in hopes of gradually building parliamentarians’ understanding of the issues they face over the longer term, and also of creating a reservoir of good-will that can be drawn upon should short-term crises emerge. Others, however, support APGs in hopes that the parliamentarians do more than simply receive information, but rather become proponents and drivers of policy and legislative change within Parliament.

This latter motivation is particularly evident among those organizations that sponsor APG reports or inquiries. Although they do not necessarily have full control over the final product, in the majority of cases the recommendations made in such reports will align almost completely with the existing policy objectives of the actors who supported the inquiry process. Indeed the external actors that sponsor the inquiries typically suggest which witnesses should be heard, and it is their staff that usually write the final reports.

Rather than a sharp dividing line, there is regularly overlap between those actors who engage with APGs to build long-term relationships or awareness and those looking for internal advocates. Even in the more activist APGs, there is typically just a handful of parliamentarians who are willing to devote themselves to the groups’ activities at any given time. As such, most of the external actors who support these APGs will also use them to build relationships and raise awareness with other parliamentarians. There can also be a great range in the level of activity desired by different external actors. Some partner with APGs to conduct multiple inquiries per year; others focus primarily on relationship building, turning to advocacy only when specific problems arise. Moreover, the objectives of external actors can vary depending on the nature of the issue and the political context that surrounds it. Some external actors are satisfied if APG members agree to write to a minister in support of a given policy suggestion. Others may push parliamentarians to go further by conducting inquiries, introducing motions, conducting debates, or putting forward private members’ bills.

In Canada, several of the lobbyists interviewed reported turning to APGs because they had difficulty gaining access to cabinet ministers. Their hope was to find parliamentarians who could
serve as “champions” and take their messages forward to cabinet members and other officials. As one lobbyist described the situation in a feature article on APGs in Canada, “An MP can go places you can’t” (Mazereeuw, 2012). Another lobbyist interviewed for this research reported that his organization became interested in supporting an APG after becoming frustrated with the rising partisanship on formal parliamentary committees:

I think one of the reasons caucuses have increased on Parliament Hill is because there is a level of dysfunction in Parliament that hasn't been there in a long time. Dysfunction meaning the committees are politicized, the Senate is politicized, the House of Commons is politicized, the party caucuses are politicized... And these caucuses are forming because there is no avenue, there is no venue for people to talk at cross party lines. I think that's really an interesting bit. That dysfunction of Parliament has led to more caucuses because MPs need to dialogue. Where are they going to dialogue? In the halls of Parliament I guess - in secret. They can't do it at committees anymore, it's not possible (confidential interview, November 2013).

In the UK, advocacy through APGs was typically less of an alternative to that conducted through other channels, and more of a complement to it. In particular, the divide between “insider” and “outsider” groups described by Judge (1990) was much less evident among the organizations that conducted advocacy through APGs. As described further below, many of the more activist APGs are supported by charities that enjoy broad public support and good relations with the government. For instance, it would be challenging to describe the Church of England, with its 26 seats in the House of Lords, as an “outsider.” Yet it was a major backer for the work of the APPG on Hunger and Food Poverty, whose reports were a source of substantial embarrassment to the government. Likewise, the APPG on Smoking and Health, which conducted several inquiries on different aspects of the UK’s tobacco control policies, is supported by the anti-smoking advocacy charity Action on Smoking and Health, which is regularly consulted by the government and received £580,000 in funding from the UK Department of Health between 2011 and 2013 (Ralph, 2013). Overall, the insider/outsider dichotomy appeared to matter less in determining which external actors engaged in advocacy through APGs than whether the objectives they pursued (and hence the APGs they supported) had support in the broader public, or at least a significant portion of it.

Nevertheless, while parliamentarians may well agree with the arguments they endorse in APG reports or advance through legislative debates, critics argue that these advocacy efforts supported by external actors constitute little more than attempts to buy access to the parliamentary logo and
launder their policy demands through the actions of MPs (Straw et al., 2012). Such perceptions are not helped by the fact that external actors also provide communications support for many of the more activist groups, with press releases at times being co-branded and group websites being hosted by their partner organizations. In some cases, APGs even allow their secretariat providers to speak on the group’s behalf, a situation that raises concerns about accountability, even among the external actors themselves. One British secretariat provider described the awkwardness he felt tweeting on behalf of the group: “I don’t check every single tweet with an MP before I send it. Is that okay? Probably, possibly not… There are numerous all party groups tweeting and I imagine that a number of them are not the MP - almost all of them are not the MP” (confidential interview, December 2012).

Yet despite at times being accused of serving as proxies for outside groups, parliamentarians generally appeared to prefer belonging to those APGs that actively pursue policy change. As noted in Chapter Four, respondents in the UK and Scotland complained about those APGs that were just “talking-shops.” However, as noted above, the higher levels of party discipline and partisan tensions in Canada and Scotland mean that some groups, and their external supporters, must limit or fully avoid policy advocacy to maintain participation from all parties. The same can occur in the UK on certain issues that are the subject of strong partisan conflict, such as migration. This need to restrict policy advocacy in pursuit of cross-party support can in some cases lead to conflict between group members and those external actors who believe that the parliamentarians should be more aggressive in pursuing change. In extreme cases such conflict can lead to group dissolution, as described in Chapter Six.

At the same time, some lobbyists in the UK also reported having the reverse problem, whereby the parliamentarians leading an APG attempt to be more assertive than their external partners would like them to be, or deal with issues outside of their partners’ policy agendas. As one consultant lobbyist in the UK described:

There are particularly too many of them that don’t have a strategic focus… I know a lot of people for the secretariats for APPGs, they spend an awful lot of time trying to rein in their chairs and say, ‘Yes it would be interesting for us to do an inquiry into X, but it’s a lot of work and really be would only be doing it because you are interested in it, not because it would make an estimate of difference’ (confidential interview, October 2012).
A government relations officer for a health charity similarly recalled how the chair of the APG that it supported had proposed doing an inquiry on a topic that was not a high priority for the organization. After un成功地 trying dissuade the group from pursuing the initiative, the charity wound up supporting it to maintain good relations with the executive. External actors that seek to use APGs as tools for internal advocacy therefore must balance the potential benefits of parliamentarians’ support with the knowledge that group members may not always have the same agendas. Indeed, it is also possible that external actors who become involved with an APG in hopes of long-term relationship building may find that the parliamentarians who participate move the group in more activist direction. Given the symbolic nature of most inter-country APGs, it is quite unlikely that those organizations who funded the Canada-India Parliamentary Friendship Group expected Patrick Brown to be so assertive in his support of the country and particularly Mr. Modi. However, it also appears that they were quite willing to accept and reward such initiatives once they began.

4.3 Demonstration effects, competition, and standard lobbying practice

The role of demonstration effects was noted in Chapter Six as one of the factors that has driven APG creation in recent years, but it is worth revisiting here given that one of the major reasons that external actors come to support APGs is because other actors – and particularly their competitors – have already done so. As described in Chapter Six, APG creation tends to cluster within different sectors. This trend can be seen across a diverse range of issue areas, including among health APGs in the UK, and inter-country APGs for Balkan countries at the Canadian Parliament. The government relations manager at a British health charity described this trend as “success breeds success… [Actors] see other ones having success so they think, ‘Actually, we want a bit of that. We want to build of that success’” (confidential interview, October 2012).

These actors also tend to resist efforts to consolidate their groups even if there is considerable overlap. As another British APG administrator replied when asked about the overlap among health groups at Westminster:

I think that dynamic is reflected in the wider charitable world that you have and I think the APPGs reflect how relations are… Because, when you delve into it, it sounds like little nitty things between [charities for different health] conditions, but so you end up, when you look at comparable [health] conditions on the
surface you think, ‘Well you should work together,’ but when you get down into what the different groups are aiming for, quite often is a bit of a clash. And sometimes its personalities if there’s a long-standing chief executive and chairs (confidential interview, November 2012).

Demonstration effects can also happen between actors internationally. For instance, the success of the UK APPG on Cycling in building cross-party support for the issue at Westminster inspired the Share the Road Coalition to create a similar group at the Ontario Legislature.

However, while external actors may chose to support APGs in hopes of mimicking the success of existing groups, in several jurisdictions the creation of APGs appears to have been accepted as a standard lobbying tool that should likely be employed by all external actors seeking to influence policy decisions. This trend is even hinted at by Ringe et al., with one of their respondents noting that “It’s part of Lobbying 101 to set up a caucus. If you want to support an industry, the first thing you do, as a matter of course, is to find a friendly [member of Congress] who will support the establishment of a caucus” (2013: 164).

Many of the parliamentarians interviewed, and especially those in the UK, posited that the increase in APG activity had been fuelled in part by government relations firms that recommend the creation of new groups to their clients. Media reports on lobbying through APGs often offer a similar interpretation. The data on the provision of external assistance supports this hypothesis, with the number of British APGs receiving secretariat support from external lobby firms tripling from 21 in 2001 to 67 in 2014 – a rate of expansion much faster than the overall pace of APG growth. Additional groups likely were created by external actors themselves following advice from government relations firms.

Yet perhaps the most compelling evidence for the idea of “APGs as standard practice” can be found in guidebooks on lobbying from three of the jurisdictions examined. In his manual for government relations in the UK, Zetter (2008) identifies APGs as a useful method for identifying which MPs and Peers are interested in different issues. According to Zetter, APGs also fill a void in the parliamentary institutions, and can help lobbyists to piggy-back on Parliament’s prestige to attract publicity:

APPGs fulfil a useful purpose in Parliament. Whilst select committees can range far and wide in their inquiries, there are only a couple of dozen of them. There are… hundreds of APPGs, and they can develop a real expertise in their closely-
defined areas. Increasingly many of them now produce reports. Although these are of variable quality, their parliamentary status does ensure that they receive a fair amount of media attention… Because APPGs receive little support and no funding from Parliament, they are often grateful for outside assistance. They are, therefore, an excellent entrée into the system for external companies and consultancies (2008: 167–8).

Zetter suggests several ways for lobbyists to engage with APGs, including by providing or sponsoring the secretariat, offering speakers, arranging visits, and putting forward ideas for group activities or reports. However, he follows this advice with a call for lobbyists to observe the appropriate rules, and warns that “APPGs which are thinly-veiled fronts for commercial organizations can attract extremely negative press comment” (2008: 168).

The leading guide for those preparing to appear at parliamentary committees in Canada similarly includes a profile of the Parliamentary Steel Caucus. It highlights how the caucus was an effective tool for educating MPs over time on the challenges facing the steel industry and helping to reduce the partisan tensions around the issue. This allowed the caucus to ultimately serve as a “bridgehead for dealing with the standing committees” when legislation of concern to steel producers was being considered (McInnes, 2005: 23). The profile also notes that the nonpartisan nature of the caucus was the key to its success, and that advises that “developing a rapport [with MPs] takes time, but it can facilitate thoughtful consideration of the issues.” The Canadian government relations trade publication Lobby Monitor also published a profile on the benefits of APGs. The sources interviewed described them as an inexpensive way for lobbyists to “leverage” their broader government relations messages by having parliamentarians echo the same points that were made to ministers directly (Mazereeuw, 2012). Likewise, a forthcoming “how-to” book on government relations in Scotland includes an entire chapter on engaging with the cross-party group system at the Scottish Parliament (McGeachy and Ballard, 2016).

The perception that APGs are an effective government relations tool has also been internalized by the external actors who sponsor APGs, with the result that actors may now seek to create APGs in part as a way to identify themselves as the leading organization on a particular issue.

One government relations manager with a major British charity was somewhat skeptical as to whether the APG supported by his organization was worth the resources it consumed, but noted that the organization’s leadership was committed to the initiative:
I think is in some ways for organizations like ours who are kind of quite big on the UK stage in advocacy terms, there is sometimes kind of an internal expectation that setting up an all-party group or cross-party group is something that is going to tick a few boxes internally. And I think that there certainly is that feeling—particularly the ones that have interest groups as the secretariat like ours does (confidential interview, December 2012).

Indeed, a consultant lobbyist in Ottawa suggested that creating an APG could produce the perception of political influence among an organization’s stakeholders as any contacts with parliamentarians sounded impressive to those unfamiliar with the political system:

And also there's an advantage for organizations to create these caucuses as well because then you could tell your members that you've come to Ottawa and you've spoken to the caucus. ‘Okay that's great – we've got some real influence’… It's a two-way street, it benefits everybody. If you're the Canadian Diabetes Association and you've got an advocacy department and your advocacy department can talk about how the organization came to Ottawa and met with the Diabetes Caucus, which includes MPs from all over Parliament Hill and the Senate, [so] you must be fairly powerful (confidential interview, December 2013).

One Canadian MP suggested that a similar dynamic could be behind the proliferation of inter-country APGs as well, with each group being a “feather in the cap” for the ambassador in their professional development (confidential interview, December 2013).

Yet despite becoming accepted as a standard tool for government relations, it should be noted that consultant lobbyists were themselves somewhat divided over the utility and cost of APGs relative to other methods of lobbying. In Britain, one lobbyist who worked with a firm that provided the secretariat for a number of APGs at Westminster was quick to stress their benefits in building relations between parliamentarians and external stakeholders (confidential interview, April 2013). Another was supportive of the idea of working through APGs in general, but indicated that he typically advised clients to engage with existing groups rather than create new ones from scratch. As he stated, “it is easier to revive a semi-dormant one than to set one up. If you want to set one up, and there are quite a lot of hurdles” (confidential interview, November 2012). However, a third consultant lobbyist indicated that he generally advised his clients not to create APGs:

If I’m advising a client who has got £30K to spend on raising awareness of a particular [issue] or whatever, there are much, much more effective things they could do with that money, I think, than have an APPG. Because what they’re going to get out of an APPG is one, you know on the less tangible end, they are
going to have an identified group of parliamentarians who are interested in their issue. There are other ways to achieve that. The second thing is they might have some sort of focus. So they might be able to have an event, they might be able to put out a publication, you know they could have sort of a briefing lunch or whatever, you could do that. You don’t need an APPG for that. You could just convene a one-day meeting, or series of meetings. You can have a lunch anyway. You don’t need to tie that to an APPG. It could just be hosted by any parliamentarian. The one thing I think they can do which is more difficult is the inquiry end, which good APPGs do. The bad APPGs don’t do that (confidential interview, November 2012).

In Scotland, a consultant lobbyist similarly said that he would not recommend that a client create a new group, given the cost and time involved and since there was likely to be an existing APG to which the client could make presentations (confidential interview, December 2012).

While not necessarily providing any greater benefits, the absence of APG regulations at the Canadian Parliament appears to change the equation somewhat by reducing the work required. As one consultant lobbyist replied when asked if he would recommend that a client create a caucus:

It depends on the organization and how active they want to be and what their goal is. If their goal is to increase long-term awareness of an industry or cause we might suggest that - if it fits with either the interest of Parliament at the time or if there's enough in terms of riding profile. If for example there's good representation of a particular industry across the country, we might say you've got all of these MPs who have an interest in small business and you're having a hard time communicating with them, this is what you might want to consider… It's fairly low risk and potentially high reward. The only thing it really takes for a caucus to be active is that you probably have to do it more than once every few years - you have to meet on The Hill - I think annually - you've got to actually then follow-up and communicate, so send out information quarterly or twice a year to your caucus (confidential interview, December 2013).

This greater enthusiasm for APGs from the Canadian lobbyist also likely reflected the smaller number of groups in operation, while the British and Scottish respondents complained that too many groups had been established in each jurisdiction.

4.4 Differences between actors

As discussed above, organizations whose objectives enjoy broad public support (or at least do not attract sustained criticism) are more likely to engage with APGs in the hopes of turning parliamentarians into internal advocates for their desired policy changes. Although not always
the case, these organizations tend to be charities, NGOs, or not-for-profit organizations that are perceived to be acting in the public interest. In contrast, actors such as corporations or business associations which appear to be motivated by private gain face far greater scrutiny or their engagement with APGs and are much more likely to limit their involvement with APGs to relationship-building and awareness raising.

Several of the respondents in the UK referred to the infamous case of the APPG on Identity Fraud, which was backed by Fellowes, a manufacturer of document shredding machines. The group issued a report that urged Britons to shred their personal material, including Christmas cards, to prevent identity theft. However, many saw it as a largely blatant attempt by a corporation to promote its own commercial advantage. Indeed, The Times highlighted both the group and its report as part of its broader reporting on lobbying and APGs. Robert Thomson, the paper’s editor, then mentioned the group as part of its letter to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards regarding the outcome of its investigation:

> you may want to consider whether you feel it is possible for an all-party group to be compromised by commercial or charity/non-profit backing. We raised concerns, for instance, that the All Party Identity Fraud group recently released a press release advocating shredding or securely storing Christmas cards, and their group is backed by Fellowes, which makes shredders and secure documents holders (United Kingdom. House of Commons. Committee on Standards and Privileges, 2006: 33).

However, while Mr. Thomson’s letter mentioned the potential for a group to be compromised by charitable backing, none of the examples that it explored in its reporting were in fact charities. Instead, its reporting centred on the APPGs on Beer, Pharmacy, Small Shops, Nuclear Energy, Identity Fraud, and Fire Safety and Rescue – all of which were supported either by corporations or by business associations.

The same corporate focus was evident in a further investigation into APG funding published by The Times in 2013. The study focused on the role of external partners and lobby firms in shaping the content of the reports that APGs issue:

> With a green portcullis logo and smart cover page that echoes Commons house style, the all-party group on aviation's report has the air of an official parliamentary document.
The 46-page inquiry is a self-described examination of aviation policy and air passenger duty. Few would disagree that it is a subject worthy of parliamentarians' attention. But the report fails to mention one key fact: it was produced with the help of the airline industry, which vigorously opposes the tax on flying and has a strong vested interest in seeing government policy change. A note in the introduction thanks a lobbying company, MHP Communications, and the campaign group, A Fair Tax on Flying, for their assistance. It omits the fact that one of MHP's clients is Heathrow airport (Pitel, 2013: 6).

The article went on to highlight the external support from corporations and foreign government received by a range of other APGs. Yet charities and NGOs are likewise involved in producing the reports of the APGs they supported, and at times also failed to make the extent of their involvement clear. For instance, while the APPG on Cancer’s report into cancer inequalities notes that MacMillan Cancer Support provides the group’s secretariat, it does not specify that the charity wrote the report or paid for it the cost to print it (All Party Parliamentary Group on Cancer, 2009).

This focus on corporate support is not just a pre-occupation for The Times. Repeated investigations by The Guardian into the external assistance declared by British APGs similarly highlighted funding from businesses while omitting that from other actors (Ball, 2011; Ball and Beleaga, 2012). For instance, while pointing out the £32,000 that British Telecom gave to the Parliamentary Choir and the travel funding received by a number of inter-country APGs, it did not mention the £41,395 that the APPG on Population, Development, and Reproductive Health had received from the United Nations Population Fund (Ball and Beleaga, 2012; Beleaga, 2012). Press reports raising concerns over the external support available to APGs in Scotland also similarly concentrated on corporate sponsorship, such as the £2,655 provided by the Scotch Whisky Association for the CPG on Scotch Whisky’s annual reception and the £5,400 provided by the National Association of Funeral Directors’ to operate the secretariat for the CPG on Funerals and Bereavement (Barnes, 2013a). As described in Chapter Two, there was also considerable concern over the fact that a health lobbyist, Jacqui Forde, was providing the secretariat for two Scottish APGs, even though she did so on a pro-bono basis.

The differential scrutiny faced by business-supported APGs versus those supported by charities or not-for-profit actors also manifests itself in the fact that the vast majority of the British APGs that are supported by independent secretariat organizations (ISOs) deal with business related issues. Such groups the APPGs on Corporate Governance, Health, Manufacturing, and Skills
and Employment, as well as the Parliamentary Advisory Council on Transport Safety and several others. These ISOs are employed in an attempt to create an arm’s length relationship between external funders and APG activities in the hopes of improving transparency and objectivity. They are also typically funded by multiple sponsors, again seeking to prevent the perception that the groups’ activities are dictated by any one actor. Indeed, when asked when corporations should become involved in APGs, a consultant lobbyist replied that “if they were the sole funder, it could be problematic” (confidential interview, November 2012). Yet even despite these measures, such ISO-supported groups are often criticized in media reports (e.g. Ball and Beleaga, 2012; Pitel, 2013).

Research has also found that parliamentarians themselves look more favourably on APGs supported by charities than those assisted by corporations. As part of her study of the ethics of British MPs, Mancuso (1995) interviewed 100 backbench MPs regarding the ethics of a range of activities. One of the items asked respondents to evaluate whether it would be corrupt if “An all-party group on the aged secures the services of a full-time research assistant at the expense of Age Concern” (1995: 34). Although just 11 percent of those interviewed felt the activity was corrupt, many flagged that their response would be different depending on the organization involved. Indeed one MP specifically noted “Age Concern is too humanitarian. It evokes one’s sympathy, unlike the Nutrition Group which has researchers hired by every food manufacturer in Britain…” (anonymous backbench MP quoted in Mancuso, 1995: 43). Overall, Mancuso reported that MPs found the question challenging, with few labelling the activity as corrupt, but just 57 percent saying they would be involved with the group themselves. The potential for corporate-funded APGs to be subject to harsher criticism was also noted in the Standards Committee’s Report on the findings of the Speakers’ Working Group. As its conclusion states:

text:

external funding [of APGs], no matter from what source, imports a degree of risk. Westminster insiders may be able to distinguish between the “amen chorus for obvious commercial interest” and policy driven groups, but those outside the system may be less able to do so. Charities and campaign groups may wish to ensure that their view reaches Members as much as commercial organisations do. That said, we have no reason to doubt the Chief Executive of Macmillan [Cancer Support – a charity]… that his organisation considered supporting the APPG on Cancer as “a bit of a duty on the likes of us to do it—because we can”. It would be naive to think that all the organisations supporting APPGs do so entirely for altruistic reasons or as a contribution to corporate social responsibility; it would be over-cynical to assume that APPGs are supported only because they directly
advantage the organisation giving support (United Kingdom. House of Commons. Committee on Standards, 2013: 17).

This seeming double standard for different types of APGs has also not gone unnoticed by corporations themselves. Following *The Times*’ 2013 reports regarding the funding provided to APGs by corporations and business associations, Imperial Tobacco raised concerns that representatives from the charity Action on Smoking and Health (ASH), which provides the secretariat for the *APPG on Smoking and Health*, attended a meeting between group members and a government health minister, but failed to declare their presence (Ralph, 2013). The Tobacco Manufacturers Association also declined to appear at the APPG’s inquiry into illicit tobacco sales. In a letter to the group’s chair, the TMA’s secretary general wrote that the decision was based on the belief that “my oral evidence would not be received in the impartial and transparent way that I would expect from an inquiry panel” (quoted in Ralph, 2012).

Despite such pushback, as noted in Chapter Five, the comparative lack of media or public scrutiny appears to have emboldened the charities and NGOs that support APGs to be more assertive in using the groups as campaigning tools. To quote again from the British public affairs manager mentioned in Chapter Five,

> for the [charity], as advocacy manager, I would also see the APPG as a means by which we take forward some of our campaigning work and our policy calls. We as the secretariat would work closely with the chair on the kind of issues he would want to address through the year through the all party group, and of course it’s an opportunity for us to, if we’ve got something we want to push, something that we want to galvanize MP support for, then we can obviously create a meeting or an event under the auspices of the APPG to promote that in Parliament (confidential interview, November 2012).

The government relations manager for another British charity similarly admitted that “I think that there is a bit of a halo effect with the charity run ones. The people think, ‘Well of course they can’t be pushing their own agendas’” (confidential interview, November 2012). She then went on to describe how, when it appeared that government funding for one of its programs might be cut, the charity encouraged the group it supported to publish a report on the program’s benefits and the need for its continuation.

This assertiveness stood in contrast to the more cautious tone of an APG administrator who was employed by a British business association:
Our member companies don’t really know a lot about Parliament, don’t really get themselves involved too much. We try and encourage them to see the local MPs, but most of them completely hate it, and they just don’t know what to do… We never overtly take over the [APG] reception, or the roundtable discussion, because number one it would be really dull. Number two, the parliamentarians, they wouldn’t really support us in terms of the all-party group if we were there and we looked like we were pushing [our own agenda]… So we are solid on that, so from our members’ point of view it does put us in Parliament and give us a presence there. But it also gives us access to the MPs that are part of the group as well (confidential interview, November 2012).

This difference in lobbying approach was also noted by parliamentary staff and APG administrators at Westminster who work with both groups supported by not-for-profits and those supported by corporations. As one respondent put it:

But there still is a divide between ones that are captured by NGOs, and write NGO statements, and ones where [the secretariat] people work in Parliament for the members, and work with the NGOs to get information… Like the NGOs don’t get slated in the press for blackmailing MPs, whereas any pharmaceutical company that gets seen giving money to politicians, they [say], ‘What are they doing? What’s going on?’ (confidential interview, November 2012).

Another agreed:

I find the NGOs are the worst for the lobbying... The pharma ones I don’t think would dare do it so overtly. For them it’s almost more the corporate social responsibility exercise, a social responsibility exercise than a lobbying thing. But it really depends on who runs the secretariat for the APPG and whether they sit in a member’s office, or sit in an NGO somewhere and are therefore very much of that world (confidential interview, November 2012).

A further development is the growing tendency of corporations to channel their support to APGs through charities in hopes of reducing ethical concerns. This trend is evident both at Westminster and Holyrood, with charities receiving grants to in turn provide assistance to APGs. For instance, the Bayer Plc, Boehringer Ingelheim and Pfizer-BMS Alliance provided support to the Atrial Fibrillation Association which in turn hired the lobby firm Insight Public Affairs to provide the secretariat to the APPG on Atrial Fibrillation. One APG public affairs manager with a British health charity described the trend this way:

I think public affairs agencies and advisers are now very canny. So they know that even if they are doing stuff on behalf of pharmaceutical companies, they tend to get the voluntary sector types involved early on. And there is something in that.
So for example if you are an agency, and you have a pharmaceutical company that is saying, ‘Right this is a really important issue. I want to people to really know about [a specific condition].’ Very rarely would they think well Roche, or GSK, or whichever pharmaceutical company should be the front of it. They would always say, ‘Well let’s get a group together of charities.’ And of course those charities might think, ‘Well we’ve got no support… and this is a really good way of raising our issue.’ So on the whole it tends to be quite smoothly done. And actually some pharmaceutical companies are better than others at having, respecting with those charities are saying and doing (confidential interview, October 2012).

However, this approach has also come under scrutiny. At Holyrood, the charity Pain Concern was replaced as the secretariat for the CPG on Chronic Pain in 2012 after MSPs raised concerns over the £1500 grant that it had received from the medical products company Meditronic to cover the cost of providing the secretariat to the group (Hutcheon, 2014b). Rare Disease UK, which provides the secretariat for CPG on Rare Diseases, also came under fire for receiving £50,000 in pharmaceutical industry support while working to secure government funding for the medications needed to treat rare diseases, including some manufactured by the donor corporations (Hutcheon, 2014c). These instances also demonstrate that even though all APGs at the Scottish Parliament tend to be less aggressive in pursuing policy change, observers are still highly sensitive to any potential for corporate influence on their activities.

In Canada APGs face much less media scrutiny over the external support that they receive, most likely due to the minimal disclosure requirements they face. Indeed, what criticism has emerged focuses on the one area where disclosure is mandated: support for travel. As described above, MPs must disclose all external support received for travel, not just that for their work with APGs, and many fail to identify when such funding does pertain to APG activities. Nonetheless, the media have repeatedly seized on the support given to members of the Canada-Taiwan and Canada-Israel friendship groups for travel to those countries. So far, however, there has been no apparent changes in the behaviour of such groups.

Like those at Holyrood, APGs in Ottawa tend to be less activist than their British counterparts, with both those sponsored by corporations or business associations and those sponsored by charities or NGOs tending to avoid overt policy advocacy, and serving primarily as forums for information sharing and discussion. However, there are some small signs that Canadian APGs that are supported by charities are gradually being more overtly incorporated into the broader government relations initiatives of their sponsors. Examples include the presence of the World
Wildlife Fund’s panda mascot at an *Oceans Caucus* meeting (see Figure 4.4), and Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society’s whale mascot at an event put on by the *International Conservation Caucus*. Members of the *Anti-Poverty Caucus*, which is supported by the Dignity for All Campaign, also took part in a photo-op marking the submission of thousands of postcards from the campaign’s supporters that called for the creation of an anti-poverty strategy in Canada (see Figure 4.5). While perhaps generating useful content for MPs’ newsletters, such photo-ops highlight the role played by the external partners who support APGs at the expense of the groups themselves.

5 Ethical concerns

As described in Chapter Two, there have been ongoing concerns in the UK, Scotland, and Canada that external actors use the support that they provide to APGs in order to gain inappropriate influence over legislative decisions. Similar worries have also emerged regarding APGs at the US Congress. Caldwell notes that as early as the late 1970s, “The fear was that these bodies, expanding in number and influence, [had] circumvented the earlier reform actions that had cut off private monies flowing into Congress – that, indeed, money and influence had merely found a new path inside” (1988: 626). By the early 1990s, Member of Congress Pat Roberts went so far as to call the caucus system “an accident waiting to happen” (quoted in Burger, 1992; cited by Ringe et al., 2013: 96).

However, the previous section demonstrates that rather than a concern about all external support, in reality such anxieties focus primarily on involvement in APGs by corporations, business associations, and foreign governments. While foreign governments have done little to change their tactics, many corporate actors have attempted to put their support of APGs at arms’ length by routing it either through independent secretariat organizations or by giving grants to charities that in turn support APGs. So far, neither initiative has achieved much success in quieting ethical concerns, with the media reporting on the membership fees that corporations pay to join those groups served by independent secretariat organizations, and parliamentarians expressing alarm over corporate funding for charities.

Yet despite such ongoing worries, the proportion of APGs that are supported by corporate interests has declined significantly while that from charities and other not-for-profit groups has grown. As a result, an increasing share of APG activity is largely escaping public criticism.
Indeed, rather than questioning the appropriateness of the support received, media outlets will often report positively on the work they perform, as demonstrated by the extensive and largely positive media coverage of the various inquiry reports released by the APPGs on *Body Image, Cycling, Financial Education for Young People, and Hunger and Food Poverty* when they published their respective inquiry reports.

As the respondents quoted in the previous section indicate, it is harder to find fault with the external assistance that APGs receive from charities and NGOs given that they generally are seen to be acting in the public interest, while corporations and foreign government are perceived to be solely interested in their own bottom lines. However, both perceptions can be misleading. While corporations may be primarily motivated by profit, it nonetheless remains the case that growth in the corporate sector will likely lead to more employment. As such, reducing the opportunities for parliamentarians to gain a better understanding of the needs of the business sector may harm longer-term prosperity. Conversely, the charities that provide assistance to APGs will often highlight such support in their communications with donors, especially if the APG is able to secure policy change in line with the charity’s objectives. In addition, supporting an APG can allow charities and not-for-profits to gain positive media coverage that improves their perception among the public. For instance, the Church of England’s support of the *APPG on Hunger and Food Poverty* provided it with very positive publicity at a time when it was being criticized over its failure to allow the ordination of women bishops. Given the intense competition for donor support, such involvement with APGs can provide a competitive advantage in organizational fundraising. Moreover, many charities also receive direct government support or implement government programming, meaning that engaging with parliamentarians through APGs may help them to secure additional income, especially by building political support for new initiatives.

It should also be noted that the charitable sector demonstrates the same inequalities between large and small actors found in the corporate sector. Charities that deal with certain popular causes may have a much greater capacity to fundraise than those dealing with issues that are less well known, or in some cases are simply less photogenic. As a result, activities by charity-supported APGs may distort policy priorities in a way that reflects and reinforces these inequalities, not only because some charities will have more resources to support APG initiatives, but also since parliamentarians are likely to be more interested in the same causes that
are popular with donors. It is also possible that APG activity may be skewed by the priorities of a few large donors who are willing to bankroll charities or NGOs on niche causes.

It certainly remains true that there are several APGs that continue to be dominated by corporate interests, or are funded by corporations primarily to facilitate parliamentarians’ personal enjoyment. However, assuming that those APGs supported by charities are apolitical is misleading. Even if the charitable staff themselves have only the best of intentions, their ability to fundraise and hence to support APGs is still affected by structural inequalities, meaning that the assistance they provide has the potential to skew policy priorities.

6 Conclusion and discussion

The results presented above clearly indicate that external organizations have at least facilitated if not directly encouraged the expansion of APGs over the past ten years in the four jurisdictions examined. While there certainly are still some APGs that operate without external assistance, many of these are inter-country groups that actually receive undeclared support from the embassies of their partner countries. Moreover, even those APGs in Scotland or the UK that did not declare any external assistance may in fact have received support, but the value was not sufficiently high to require reporting.

However, while confirming the extensive engagement between APGs and external organizations, the results cast some doubt on fears that the groups are being used for corporate lobbying, or at least that corporations in particular are driving APG growth. In the UK most corporations provide only small contributions that are used to purchase access to those APGs that serve as forums for stakeholder discussions. Reflecting this trend, all of the contributions to APGs (financial or otherwise) made by corporations in 2014 were registered by just 78 APGs, while contributions from charities went to 191 different groups. In Scotland the value of the assistance provided by corporations dropped dramatically from 2003 to 2014, while that from charities increased substantially. And in both these jurisdictions, as well as in Canada, the growth in the number of APGs receiving secretariat support from charities has far outpaced that provided by corporations or business associations.

This arrangement suggests that charities have found APGs to be an effective way to engage with parliamentarians. Informants indicated that demonstration effects were often at play, with
charities in a given sector, and especially in the area of health, moving to create APGs after seeing their counterparts first undertaking the initiative. However, the idea that APGs are an effective way to engage with parliamentarians also appears to have become so widely accepted some actors now believe that they should support a group, to some extent as a sign of organizational status. And while there are some differences of opinion among consultant lobbyists regarding the utility of APGs relative to other methods of government relations, the fact remains that the number of British groups receiving assistance from lobby firms more than tripled between 2001 and 2014.

A further implication of these findings is that differences in the resources available to charities and corporations do not appear to hinder the former’s engagement with APGs. Indeed if anything, the APG format actually favours charitable campaigning, with the media being much less likely to criticize advocacy by those groups backed by charities relative to those backed by corporations. It is especially hard to imagine that so many corporations could serve as group secretariats without disclosing their costs in the way that charities have been able to do. Moreover, focusing on secretariat services can often give charities greater influence than would be possible through monetary contributions. In particular, the secretariat organizations tend to provide parliamentarians advice on what issues they should address, and which external experts they should invite to present at Parliament. As such, a charity serving as the secretariat to an APG could potentially have a greater impact on the information received by parliamentarians than a corporation that makes a financial contribution to a group that operates as a stakeholder forum.

It is possible that charities are more likely to engage with APGs simply because they cannot afford the other, more expensive avenues of lobbying pursued by corporations. However, the current situation in which charitable support for APGs goes largely unscrutinized ignores the fact that charities and other not-for-profits are political actors. Their engagements with parliamentarians through APGs can produce real material gains for their organizations in terms of increased donor support, greater public recognition, or increased government funding. The distribution of resources between charities also reflects broader social inequalities, meaning that the resources they provide to APGs may help to further entrench the same divides.
CHAPTER 9

TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE THEORY OF APG GROWTH

1 Explaining the rise of APGs

The growing numbers of APGs in legislatures worldwide is a surprising trend. Variations in size, structure, legislative powers, party alignments, political culture, and electoral systems would appear to present parliamentarians in different jurisdictions with very different incentives and rewards for engaging in such behaviour. Yet the continued creation of APGs, often in the face of official efforts to curtail their expansion, suggests that parliamentarians feel there is value in participating in their activities. At the same time, the growth of these groups would not be possible, or at least would be substantially reduced, without the support provided by external actors, who must also perceive some benefit from their engagement.

Past attempts to explain the activities or growth of APGs are limited by a range of factors. For instance, Ringe et al. (2013) attempt to explain APG behaviour using just one aspect of group activity: information sharing. This limited focus prevents them from exploring the broader reasons why APG numbers would increase over time. Similar problems confront the social network model developed by Victor and Ringe (2009), which attempts to explain APG activity by looking at the patterns of participation among different groups of legislators. Yet this attempt to infer the purpose of APGs from their structure makes Victor and Ringe equally unable to account for group formation. In contrast, several scholars, including Hammond (1998), Morgan (1979), and Singh (1996), each put group formation at the forefront of their analyses, arguing that APGs emerged as an adaptive response by parliamentarians seeking to find alternative ways to achieve their goals after formal legislative institutions proved unable to cope with changes in the broader political environment. Nevertheless, their analyses are also limited by a lack of consideration of the role played by external actors in APG creation, as well as a focus solely on the tangible goals pursued by legislators.

This study set out to develop a comprehensive account for the growth of APGs across multiple jurisdictions in recent years. Based on an analysis of APG behaviour, structure, formation, and
the factors shaping participation by both parliamentarians and external actors, it identifies three interrelated causes that have driven APG expansion. First, it builds on the research by Hammond, Singh, and Morgan, to argue that the growth of APGs has occurred because the groups help both parliamentarians and external actors to achieve their goals in the face of a changing political environment characterized by rising policy complexity, increased demands from citizens, and growing social diversity. Yet it also finds that the range of goals that can be facilitated by APG activity includes not only tangible outcomes like policy influence, but more subjective objectives as well. For instance, APG participation not only provides parliamentarians with access to policy-relevant information, but also can create feelings of personal satisfaction in group leaders. For their part, external lobbyists not only gain direct access to parliamentarians who share an interest in certain policy issues, but can also use APG activity as a “deliverable” to justify their own salaries and budgets. Moreover, these benefits are not the same for all those involved, varying both within jurisdictions and across them. In some jurisdictions, electorally vulnerable legislators are more likely to take part in APGs as a way to signal to their constituents. In others, no relationship between margin of victory and participation can be found. Similarly, most corporations engage with APGs in the hopes of slowly raising awareness around issues over the long-term, while charities are more likely to support group activities as a way to advance specific policy proposals.

These variations in turn reflect the great diversity that can be found among APGs themselves in terms of their structure, objectives, and activities, with substantial differences once again being found both between jurisdictions and within them as well. While there are many APGs at the British Parliament that actively engage in policy discussions by producing reports and sponsoring parliamentary debates, there are others that meet only enough to fulfil the minimum requirements for registration. Yet there are more proportionately more APGs at Westminster that conduct vigorous policy advocacy than in either Canada or Scotland.

Together these differences point to the second factor that has enabled the mass expansion of APGs, namely the emergence of APGs a modular tool that can be adapted to a wide range of functions, situations, and organizational structures. Groups can be as active or passive as their members and external partners wish them to be. They can operate on issues of policy consensus
or policy conflict, or largely avoid policy discussions entirely. They can have elected executives or self-proclaimed executives. They can focus on broad policy issues, or niche problems affecting only a small number of citizens. In this way APGs have distinguished themselves as a flexible alternative to formal legislative committees, which have specific policy mandates, and must typically devote much of their time to official parliamentary business, such as considering draft legislation or reviewing the performance of government departments.

This plasticity of the APG format demonstrates the difficulties encountered when trying to generalize about the role that they play and the factors leading to their growth. However, it also illustrates the enduring attractiveness of the “all-party” concept and the desire to move issues outside of the realm of partisan conflict. In each legislature APGs were first formed on a small number of topics, but then gradually expanded as the success of the initial groups was emulated by those concerned with an ever broader range of issues. These demonstration effects applied both within jurisdictions, but also between them as well, in part thanks to the exchanges between legislators facilitated by organizations like the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and also international policy communities. Yet this emulation was also accompanied with innovation, with newly created APGs finding new ways to influence policy, adopting new organizational structures, or seeking out new methods of funding. Two prominent examples include the emergence of APGs as a tool for holding inquiries, and also the development of independent secretariat organizations as a way to create greater transparency in external funding.

While demonstration effects can still prompt the creation of individual APGs, their gradual expansion to an ever larger range of policy issues and the increasing diversity of the activities that they undertake has led to the third factor that has facilitated APG expansion, namely their acceptance as part of the standard practices for both parliamentarians and external stakeholders. For electorally vulnerable parliamentarians, participating in APGs emerged alongside signing an early-day motion, presenting a petition, or making a members’ statement as a standard way for members to signal their sympathy for the concerns of constituents. Likewise, for external actors, APG involvement joined mass-mailings to parliamentarians and “lobby days” with grassroots members as tools for raising awareness among politicians. Moreover, there are also signs that

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69 This reality is found not only in Canada and Ontario, but in the UK as well if one includes the various unregistered APGs
some external actors now feel that they should serve as the primary partner for an APG as a sign of organizational prestige.

Nonetheless, APGs cannot operate fully outside of the realities of the legislatures in which they operate. Instead, the scope and extent of APG activity is shaped by the pre-existing institutional structure, political culture, and partisan alignments in each jurisdiction. In the UK, APG growth has been helped by the willingness of backbench parliamentarians to defy their party leaders, itself a product of the lack of effective mechanisms for cooperation between front and back-bench parliamentarians. By comparison, stronger party discipline in Canada has created a greater tendency to rely on intra-party policy caucuses instead of APGs, at times with separate caucuses on the same issue being established in each party. This trend is even more pronounced in Ontario, which even lacks inter-country APGs. At Holyrood, the use of a proportional electoral system and the presence of strong tensions between parties (particularly Labour and the SNP) should theoretically reduce the numbers of APGs in operation. Yet the legacy of ideals of “new politics” on which the Parliament was founded and the general role of Scottish APGs as forums for discussion, not action, has allowed them to flourish over time.

2 Existing theories of APG activity

While three major theories have been developed to explain the activities and impact of APGs, none can provide a comprehensive account for the growth in APG activity witnessed in legislatures worldwide in recent years. The information exchange model put forward by Ringe et al. (2013) is founded on the theoretical premise that the primary benefit of APGs is to “help legislators overcome an institutional collective action dilemma… around the high demand and insufficient supply of information in legislative politics” (Ringe et al., 2013: ). They contend that APGs create weak, bridging ties that facilitate the exchange of information between legislators who would otherwise be unconnected due to the divisions created by parties or committees. APGs are able to survive despite the dominance of such weak ties, they argue, because of legislative subsidies provided by external actors and the strong ties formed between the members of the leadership network in each group.

The information-exchange model is helpful for drawing attention to the different levels of engagement between APG leaders and rank-and-file members, as well as the importance of external support in sustaining group activities. However, the theory cannot explain why APGs
form, nor why the number of groups should increase. Indeed, the authors specifically state that most APGs exist for purposes beyond information exchange, but do not factor such objectives into their model. In the same way, despite arguing that APG operations depend on higher levels of engagement from those legislators in the leadership network, they do not systematically explore why they choose to become involved. Together these gaps make their theory largely static, and unable to account for the growth of APGs over time.

Virtually the same challenges can be found with the social network theory developed by Victor and Ringe (2009), which holds that APGs serve as networks which allow disadvantaged legislators (i.e. those who are newly elected, have low margins of victory, and/or lack formal leadership positions) to form connections to advantaged legislators. In particular, the theory lacks any consideration of why groups form, why the number of groups might increase over time, or why advantaged legislators would choose to become involved.

While they each highlighted somewhat different developments, the goal-oriented explanations of APG activity put forward by Hammond (1998) and Singh (1996) in the US, and Morgan (1979) in the UK, all see the growth of APGs as an adaptive response by legislators seeking to overcome changes in the broader political environment and/or “deficiencies” in formal legislative institutions that had made it harder for them to achieve their goals. For Hammond, involvement in APGs allowed Members of Congress to better respond to the growing complexity of policy issues and rising demands from external stakeholders that were overwhelming the formal legislative committees. In contrast, Singh saw the expansion of APGs as an attempt by “rank-and-file” legislators to regain influence following rule changes that had increased the power of party leaders, and also to adapt to changes in media coverage that had increased the focus on individual candidates during election campaigns. Writing on the British case, Morgan combines elements from both American authors, contending that APGs emerged as a response to the growing complexity of government operations and rising party discipline that together had marginalized backbenchers. Specifically, APGs helped backbenchers acquire the information needed to engage in scrutiny, and also provided a platform to build a public profile.

By presenting the creation of APGs as a reaction to changes in the environment inhabited by parliamentarians, the goal-oriented accounts go much further than the first two theories towards explaining why the number of APGs would increase over time. However, while Hammond,
Singh, and Morgan each note that APGs are typically supported by external actors, they fail to incorporate such support into their explanations for APG growth. In addition, the authors concentrate primarily on the tangible goals pursued by legislators, such as re-election, the enactment of policy preferences, or promotion to formal positions of authority, even though many APGs focus on issues that are likely unlikely to help members to achieve any of these objectives.

3  A comprehensive model of APG growth

This study builds off these past theories of APG activity to develop a comprehensive account of APG growth that can be applied in multiple jurisdictions. Specifically, it contends that APG growth has resulted from three separate factors: the ability of APGs to help both backbench parliamentarians and external actors adapt to rising demands on the political system, the gradual expansion of the APG format into a modular tool that can be applied to a wide range of situations, and the acceptance of APG activity into the set of standard practices for both legislators and external actors. Each of these elements is now explored in turn.

3.1  Convergence of interests between legislators and lobbyists

The primary factor driving the growth of APGs in recent years is a convergence of interests between parliamentarians and external actors on the benefits of APG activity. Specifically, the creation and continuation of APGs allows both sides to pursue their goals in a mutually beneficial fashion, enabling them to achieve more together than would be possible separately. In keeping with past goal-oriented explanations of APG expansion, this study finds that this convergence results from a series of changes in the broader political environment that increased the demands on the political system, such as rising policy complexity, the growing scope of government activity, an increased desire by citizens and stakeholders to participate in government decision making, growing social diversity, and increased scrutiny of the activities of both parliamentarians and external actors. The formal legislative institutions in each jurisdiction have been unable to cope with these changes, leading parliamentarians and external actors to turn to APGs as an alternative.
3.1.1 Increasing demands on the political system

The factors that prompt APG creation, as well as those shaping participation by both parliamentarians and external actors, indicates that the growth of APGs has in no small part occurred because of the failure of existing parliamentary institutions, and particularly parliamentary committees, to deal effectively with the increased demands faced by the political system in recent decades. One of the most significant changes is that the scope and complexity of government activity has expanded dramatically in the post-war era. Governments provide more services and intervene more frequently on a wider range of issues than ever before. These changes reflect both the emergence of new technologies (e.g. the internet) and also rising expectations from citizens about what services governments should provide (e.g. public health care). At the same time, governments increasingly have less ability to act unilaterally. Instead, their actions may be restricted by international agreements (e.g. European Union legislation), or the problems themselves may require cooperation between multiple levels of government (e.g. poverty reduction) or even multiple countries (e.g. climate change, international migration). As governments attempt to extend their reach deeper into society, they also must increasingly rely on information and cooperation from external actors to achieve their objectives.

These changes have resulted in the growing complexity of policy issues, both in terms of the challenges being addressed and the intricacy of governments’ attempts to respond. Moreover, many government programs now cut across the boundaries between different policy areas. For instance, a comprehensive strategy to reduce obesity rates could require interventions in education (e.g. teaching cooking skills), health care (e.g. early diagnoses and treatment), municipal infrastructure (e.g. ensuring access to sports facilities), urban planning (e.g. designing walkable, bikeable cities), food safety (e.g. regulation of chemical additives), advertising standards (e.g. preventing the targeting of candy advertisements at children), packaging and restaurant regulations (e.g. mandating the provision of nutrition information), and taxation (e.g. imposing taxes on soft drinks), among others. Implementing such responses would require concerted action by local, regional, national, and even supra-national levels of government.

At the same time that policy issues have grown more complex, changes in social values throughout the post-war era have also resulted citizens become less trusting of government and more assertive in seeking to influence policy decisions on an ongoing basis (Nevitte, 1996). This
trend can be clearly seen in the principles of “new politics” on which the Scottish Parliament was founded, which included that the Parliament “should embody and reflect the sharing of power between the people of Scotland, the legislators and the Scottish Executive” and that it “should be accessible, open, responsive, and develop procedures which make possible a participative approach to the development, consideration and scrutiny of policy and legislation” (Consultative Steering Group on the Scottish Parliament, 1998: 6). Such beliefs that governments should share power with outside groups and facilitate participatory decision making have led to growing demands on legislatures and legislators to expand the opportunities available for public input into policy discussions. Citizens increasingly expect their representatives to be more open, available, and responsive to their input – a trend that only appears to have increased with the rise of social media.

In addition, these same changes in social values that have given rise to greater assertiveness among civil society groups have also prompted a sharp increase in the variety external actors seeking to engage with the government. In particular, the post-war era has seen the emergence of post-materialist political movements focused on identity and quality of life issues (Inglehart, 1997). Many Western societies, including those in Canada and the UK, have also become increasingly diverse in cultural and religious terms as a result of immigration, leading to the mobilization of new social groups that wish to be recognized within the political system. Such trends are also evident among legislators themselves: while not as diverse as the societies they represent, an increasing number of individuals from minority communities have been elected to public office, and have sought avenues to express their identities.

Together, the rising complexity of policy issues, desire for greater citizen engagement in politics, emergence of post-materialist activism, and growing social diversity have all increased the demands placed on the political system. Legislators today must engage with more people on a broader range of issues and in a more comprehensive and interactive way than their predecessors. Given the strong limits on debating time in the main chamber, legislative committees are typically viewed as the main venues for conducting detailed policy discussions and engaging with external actors. Yet as currently structured, the legislative committees in most jurisdictions are not well designed to examine complex issues that cut across multiple policy fields. At the same time, they are also often too busy to address smaller or niche policy issues, meaning that the unique challenges facing particular stakeholders, such as specific industries,
social groups, or those with particular medical conditions, may go unexamined. Furthermore, even when parliamentary committees do look at complex issues that cut across committee jurisdictions, or narrow policy issues that affect only a few actors, they typically cannot devote the ongoing attention that may be needed to build expertise or to ensure that any recommendations that they make are actually implemented. And no matter what issue they are studying, parliamentary committees can typically hear from just a small number of the external actors who may wish to testify on any given subject. Similar limits also face parliamentarians, with the ability to vote on committee business usually being limited to actual committee members. Committees are also poorly suited to the kind of symbolic representation that is desired by some communities. While external groups may be invited to testify before committees on certain symbolic dates, committee meetings generally do not provide an opportunity for the kinds of ceremony, speeches, or mingling that are typically associated with events to mark special occasions.

Echoing Hammond’s (1998) conclusions from the US, this study finds that the growth of APGs in Canada, Ontario, the UK, and Scotland was fueled by their ability to look at issues both in greater depth and in a more holistic fashion than was possible through formal committees. For instance, Scotland’s CPG on Deafness deals with all aspects of the disability, leading it to engage with issues including health care, education, the legal status of sign language, and the challenges faced by the hearing impaired in accessing government services. Moreover, the APG was one of several created by stakeholder groups which felt as though their particular needs were not receiving sufficient attention from the CPG on Disability, which itself had been created to ensure that disability issues were given a high profile at Holyrood following devolution. Likewise, the report issued by the UK’s APPG on Body Image (2012) touched on a large number of policy fields including education, healthcare, drug regulation, and standards for media and advertising. The group had been founded on the initiative of the YMCA, which had grown increasingly concerned that body image issues were harming the health of young people.

As described in Chapter Six, APGs in the jurisdictions examined are also regularly formed to address issues that are seen as too narrow to receive a full committee study, such as antisemitism, palliative care, or suicide prevention. The same is also true of those British groups that form to address short term problems or crises. However, perhaps the most prominent example of this phenomenon is actually the proliferation of inter-country APGs, which reflects the inability of
legislative committees on foreign affairs to examine relations with each country. Such inter-country groups are especially valued by diplomats and other officials seeking to build ties with parliamentarians, by citizens with family or personal ties to the partner jurisdictions, and by parliamentarians who either represent such diasporic groups, or have personal ties of their own. The UK has also seen the growth of inter-country groups dedicated to the various British Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies, which similarly lack consistent attention from parliamentary committees.

A substantial number of APGs in Canada, the UK, and Scotland have also been established to raise awareness and advocate for particular industries or those affected by specific medical conditions. Such groups can permit parliamentarians and stakeholders to remain engaged with issues for extended periods in a way that is not possible for formal committees. In Canada, the Parliamentary Steel Caucus was founded in the mid-1980s in the lead up to the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement, bringing together steel producers, workers’ representatives, and parliamentarians representing those communities where the industry is located. Since its founding the group has seen immense changes in both the composition of the industry and the regulatory environment, leading the group to adopt new priorities over time. Indeed, during a downturn in the industry in 2005, the Steel Caucus even lobbied the government to change bankruptcy laws to give workers claiming unpaid wages from insolvent firms a higher priority than other creditors (Francoli, 2005).

As mentioned in Chapter Six, a similar evolution can also be seen in the UK’s All-Party Parliamentary Group on Deep Vein Thrombosis, which was initially formed in 2002 to investigate the issue of deep-vein thrombosis (DVT) among air travelers. Its chair, former Labour MP John Smith, first became active on the topic after one of his constituents and several other individuals from nearby communities died of DVT after traveling (“Airlines knew DVT risks,” 2001, “MP to lead DVT deaths probe,” 2002). However, activism by a newly formed charity, Thrombosis UK, soon raised parliamentarians’ awareness of the much larger problem of deaths from venous thromboembolism (VTE) acquired during hospital care (Hunt, 2008). These interventions led to a broadening of the discussions around thrombosis at Westminster, with Smith himself lodging an early day motion to mark the charity’s founding (Smith, 2003). Following the 2005 election, the group was refounded with support from Thrombosis UK as the APPG on Thrombosis with a focus on VTE. It then campaigned for the development of a
strategy to prevent the condition among hospital patients, and, after the launch of the strategy in 2007, changed focus again to conduct annual surveys of health authorities to monitor uptake of the guidelines. Despite this progression away from the original connection to his constituency, Smith remained chair of the group until he stood down from Parliament in the 2010 election. By comparison, the period from 2001 to 2010 saw just one select committee report into the thrombosis issue – which itself was based on a single day’s testimony (United Kingdom. House of Commons. Health Select Committee, 2005).

3.1.2 Goal achievement among legislators

APGs clearly allow parliamentarians and external actors to engage with each other over extended periods on issues that either cut across committee jurisdictions, or are too specific to attract sustained committee attention. In this way, APGs have allowed parliamentarians to cope with the increased demands placed on the political system as a result of rising policy complexity and rising expectations for participation among citizens. However, APGs not only extend the existing functions performed by legislative committees, but also enhance parliamentarians’ capacity to engage in symbolic representation. As described in Chapter Four, such symbolism is most visible in inter-country APGs as well as those devoted to particular ethnic, cultural, or religious groups. Yet there is also a symbolic element to virtually all APGs, with the creation of each group sending a message to the relevant stakeholder communities that parliamentarians share their interests and concerns. As such, APGs provide a useful tool for responding both to increased social diversity and also citizens’ desires for increased participation in the political system.

The ability of APGs to help legislatures respond to changes in the external political environment has led to a convergence of interests among parliamentarians and external actors regarding the benefits of APG activity, with involvement in the groups helping both sides to better achieve their goals. Among parliamentarians, the study confirms Hammond’s (1998) finding that involvement in APGs can help legislators to achieve the classic goals identified by Fenno: reelection, the enactment of policy preferences, and influence in the institution. Electorally vulnerable parliamentarians can use APG participation to signal to their constituents that they are concerned about a particular issue. This trend was reported anecdotally in Canada, the UK, and Scotland, and was clearly evident in the statistical results from the UK at both the executive and general membership levels. In a social media age, involvement in APGs also gives
parliamentarians the ability to appear as though they are doing something useful on a regular basis. Even if nothing meaningful comes as a result, each APG meeting attended can be highlighted in a tweet or Facebook post (especially if there is a chance for a “selfie” with guest speakers or other external actors present), allowing parliamentarians to present themselves as being engaged and influential on a given issue. Knowing this, APGs will structure their events to include photo-ops and develop template press releases for parliamentarians to use.

In terms of policy preferences, parliamentarians from all jurisdictions reported that APGs can be used as tools for policy influence. In some instances where issues are subject to partisan conflict, this influence may come from slowly building awareness over time. In others, APGs are used to actively build coalitions in support of new policy initiatives or to pressure the government on particular issues. While many are unsuccessful, several instances were found in each jurisdiction where the support and activities of APGs contributed to the adoption of new pieces of legislation, or convinced the government to change course on existing policy measures.

As for Fenno’s third goal, APG involvement can also provide an alternative path to institutional influence for those passed over for executive posts or seats on high profile committees. In this case, “institutional influence” should be seen not only as “power,” but also according to Fenno’s broader conception which includes “‘prestige,’ or ‘importance’” (1973: 2). In terms of power, the APG leaders may be asked by the government to provide feedback on policy proposals, and their contributions may be given greater weight in parliamentary debates. Indeed, APG leaders quite often mention their positions when speaking in formal parliamentary proceedings. Moreover, even if an APG is largely inactive in terms of policy interventions, just serving as the chair or vice-chair can raise a parliamentarian’s profile in the eyes of colleagues, and perhaps more importantly in those of stakeholders. Such prestige can also feed back into the goal of reelection as well, with parliamentarians often citing their involvement in APGs in their communications with constituents to show how they are working on behalf of voters. Several parliamentarians spoke directly to the reality that APG participation had offered an alternative way to gain influence after either leaving the executive or being passed over for a position. The use of APGs as an alternative pathway for influence was also evident in the fact that first-term parliamentarians in both Canada and the UK were significantly less likely to be involved in group activities.
However, besides these three classic goals, the study finds that APGs help politicians to achieve two further objectives not considered by Fenno or Hammond: feelings of relevance and personal enjoyment. Together, the fulfillment of these additional goals helps to explain why APGs continue to function and grow even when their influence may at times be lacking. Many APGs do not have a substantial impact on policy or legislation, yet just participating in group activities can give the parliamentarians a sense of purpose and achievement that is often lacking among backbenchers who typically must act as their parties direct. In fact, some politicians stressed that the activities undertaken by APGs are important even when legislators know they are likely to fail since they could at least say with a clear conscience that they had “tried.” Others noted devoting themselves to APGs that were personally rewarding despite knowing that from a professional point of view their time would be better spent on activities that could contribute to their reelection.

In contrast to such intrinsic benefits from participation, parliamentarians may also join APGs to obtain recreational benefits, such as food and drink, trips to foreign countries, or tickets to sporting and cultural events. While not quite qualifying as personal enrichment (Fenno, 1973), these benefits can be attractive to some parliamentarians who might otherwise be uninterested in joining a given group. In fact, the statistical results for Canada and the UK suggest that participation in inter-country APGs, which are the primary source of such enjoyment-related benefits, is shaped by somewhat different factors than involvement in subject groups. For instance, while female parliamentarians in the UK were more likely than their male colleagues to take part in subject APGs, they were less likely to participate in inter-country groups.

While the goals that they pursue through APGs have so far been discussed separately, in reality participation in a given group typically allows legislators to achieve several simultaneously. Involvement in a group for a particular industry may provide parliamentarians the opportunity to signal to their constituents and also to campaign for policy change. Serving as chair of an inter-country group may allow a parliamentarian to simultaneously gain feelings of relevance, a sense of prestige, and personal enjoyment. However, such benefits are not equally available to all participants. Simply being a member of an APG and attending occasional meetings may provide access to information, a chance to demonstrate support for a cause to constituents, and may contribute – as part of a broader show of support among legislators – to policy change. By comparison, the attainment of status and prestige is typically only available to those who serve as
officers and particularly to group chairs. Those holding more senior positions within APGs have a greater chance of reaping benefits in electoral terms. Group leaders are also more likely to be singled out for trips or other aspects of personal enjoyment, and to gain feelings of relevance for the work they perform. In keeping with the arguments put forward by Ringe et al. (2013), these differences in the benefits received from different types of group participation likely explains the typically low levels of engagement by the rank-and-file members of each APG: they can receive some benefits with minimal effort, and feel the additional benefits that come with leadership roles are not worth the cost in terms of time and resources.

3.1.3 Goal achievement among lobbyists

On the lobbyist side, many of those seeking to influence government policy have found that APGs provide efficient vehicles for shaping the views of parliamentarians. The vast majority of the APGs created in recent years receive secretariat and/or financial support from an outside lobbyist or stakeholder groups. As noted by Ringe et al., these lobbyists “subsidize” the operation of various APGs “by gathering support for the initial establishment of a group, by keeping membership lists, by organizing events, and by supplying information” (2013: 42). Ringe et al. argue that lobbyists are willing to provide these subsidies because the existence of an APG for their particular issue gives them privileged access to group members, whom the lobbyists hope will subsequently serve as “inside advocates” for their cause. Moreover, the strong ties formed between external actors and group leaders are seen to increase members’ confidence in the accuracy of information that lobbyists distribute via each group.

However, my research shows that the creation of an APG not only provides a network for the flow of information from lobbyists and stakeholders, but also increases the importance or significance of that information in the eyes of legislators, government officials, and even the media. All things being equal, legislators who receive information from lobbyists, stakeholders or experts speaking at an APG meeting are likely to place greater emphasis on that information than if the meeting had been arranged by the lobbyist themselves, or solely by a member of one party. The same would be true if that information has been received by letter or email: parliamentarians are more likely to read a document that arrives under the auspices of an APG than had it been forwarded by a lobbyist directly, or by legislators from a single party. This is not to say that parliamentarians would believe that the information is politically neutral in the
broader sense; APGs are expected to advocate for the causes that they support. Rather, the
information that arrives via an APG is often received in a different manner than that which is
sent by other sources. In particular, the term “all-party” implies that the information is non-
partisan or politically balanced, making it more akin to that received from a parliamentary
committee. Therefore, APGs are not only passive mechanisms for distributing information, but
change that information’s potential uptake and impact.

Given the large volume of information that parliamentarians receive, external actors whose
information is distributed via an APG can gain a strategic advantage over their competitors who
must contact legislators directly. The benefit to such external actors becomes even greater when
it is remembered that in many instances the actions taken and recommendations put forward by
APGs are heavily influenced, if not directly controlled, by the outside actors themselves. The
lobbyists who support APGs almost universally are more knowledgeable about the subject matter
than the parliamentarians involved with the group. They also have far more time available to
devote to the issue. As such, most parliamentarians who lead APGs will accept lobbyists’
recommendations about what issues to examine or what experts to hear from at group meetings.
Several of the lobbyists interviewed in the different jurisdictions spoke candidly about the extent
of their influence over group activities, and reported that legislators seldom pushed back against
the suggestions they put forward.

Moreover, in addition to giving greater legitimacy to existing information, lobbyists in the UK
and to a lesser extent Canada are increasingly helping parliamentarians to engage in the
“production” of policy recommendations through the holding of hearings and the issuing of
reports in a manner similar to that employed by parliamentary standing or select committees. The
parliamentarians involved in these exercises do have some control over which witnesses appear
and what recommendations are made. However, the fact that the inquiry process and the drafting
of the recommendations is managed almost entirely by the lobbyists who drove the initial
creation of the group and provide its secretariat means the reports produced will almost certainly
reflect the views of those organizations. legitimacy

While requiring much more effort than simply having parliamentarians distribute existing
information, this strategy of holding an inquiry and issuing a report has three major benefits.
First, even if the recommendations are exactly the same as would have been put forward by the
lobbyists on their own, the process of holding the inquiries lends them an even greater legitimacy since they appear to be coming from the politicians themselves. As such, the inquiry process allows lobbyists to launder their policy “asks” through a quasi-parliamentary process that makes them appear to have the imprimatur of parliament. This reality can be seen in news coverage, which often uses the term “a cross-party report” to refer to documents issued by both APGs and official parliamentary committees. Second, the publishing of a report can have a substantial impact on the political agenda. In the short term, releasing the study is an event that can attract news coverage, and places the onus on government officials to issue a response. Over the long term, a report can also become a resource that external actors can reference in speeches and use to highlight government delays or inaction. Future government policy is also likely to take account of the provisions in the relevant reports. Third, even if the entire process was largely staged, the act of being involved in the hearings process and the production of the report gives parliamentarians a sense of ownership over the findings. As such, the politicians involved are more likely to invest time and effort in seeking to achieve the implementation of the report’s suggestions, such as by introducing private members’ bills.

To some extent these benefits can also be achieved without holding an actual inquiry. For instance, APG members in Scotland, the UK, and to a lesser extent Canada will often follow-up on presentations at group meetings by writing to government ministers to raise concerns or advocate for policy changes based on the information that they receive. In these cases, the external actors who support APGs have succeeded in having their policy asks internalized and re-transmitted by the parliamentarians themselves, both increasing their legitimacy in the eyes of the ministers and making it more likely that the parliamentarians will take further action to pursue the adoption of the policy. Several of the APG leaders interviewed at Holyrood and Westminster indicated that they try to have each meeting end with some sort of activity like writing to a minister to avoid the perception that the groups were just “talking shops.”

Yet the actions of the lobbyists (either in-house or from a hired consulting firm) are not only aimed at influencing parliamentarians, but also pleasing the clients, executives, boards of directors, or other authorities to whom they report. Maintaining an APG can provide these government relations staff with an ongoing deliverable that creates the impression of having access to decision makers. Indeed, lobbyists can often arrange for the heads of their organizations to attend or speak at APG meetings, allowing them see first-hand the “access” that
supporting the groups can offer. As discussed in Chapter 8, there can also be a sense of prestige that comes from being the organization that supports the APG on a given topic, particularly if there are competing stakeholder organizations in the same field.

Ultimately, the creation of APGs serves the mutual interests of both politicians and lobbyists. Participation in APGs helps the parliamentarians to achieve their goals of reelection, policy change, prestige, relevance, and even personal recreation. Moreover, since lobbyists provide the majority of resources used to keep most APGs in operation, politicians are usually able to enjoy these benefits while keeping the cost to themselves at a manageable level. Those legislators who do invest more time to serve as group leaders in turn enjoy a greater share of the rewards. At the same time, lobbyists are happy to subsidize the groups because the existence of the APG not only allows them to better reach politicians with their policy proposals, but also to increase the legitimacy of those proposals in the eyes of politicians and even the general public. The activities of APGs can also help lobbyists to move issues up the political agenda, and more broadly to justify the work that they perform.

The role of external actors in creating APGs means that those policy issues with well-organized and well-funded advocacy groups are more likely to see the creation of an APG than others that are less well organized. Inequalities in the distribution of resources among lobbyists means that even within the same sector, certain voices and perspectives are more likely to be heard than others. It is important to note, however, that this finding should not be seen to indicate that all APGs are created with the help of lobbyists. For some politicians the goals described above are sufficiently important that they are willing to bear the cost of operating an APG without outside assistance. That said, groups that rely on politicians’ own resources are often limited in the activities that they can undertake and tend to have a shorter lifespan. Any financial or staff resources devoted to an APG also come at the expense of other activities that a legislator may wish to engage in.

The potential rewards from supporting APGs also do not accrue equally to all partner organizations. Instead, the close relationships between external actors and parliamentarians required for the successful operation of APGs tend to attract scrutiny from the media and members of the public when the sponsoring organizations are corporations, business associations, or foreign governments. These actors are generally presumed to engage with
parliamentarians in pursuit of their own private interests, leading to accusations that they are trying to buy politicians’ support. Conversely the support provided by charities, NGOs, and other not-for-profits tends to attract much less attention or criticism even though these groups account a much greater proportion of the assistance received by APGs and often are more assertive in using the groups as tools for advocacy. Indeed some charities directly link their work with APGs to their own government relations campaigns. Corporate efforts to mitigate concerns over their work with APGs by creating arms’ length funding mechanisms and independent secretariat organizations have so far shown little success.

Finally, it should noted that Ringe et al. (2013) make similar observations regarding the convergence of interests between parliamentarians and external organizations in APGs, describing the relationship between them as “symbiotic.” However, while mentioning other motivations for APG participation in passing, their argument that APGs primarily serve as vehicles for the information exchange guides their assessment of the benefits exchanged between parliamentarians and external actors. As they write, “In line with our theoretical propositions, the exchange of information lies at the core of the relationship between [APGs] and outside advocates” (Ringe et al., 2013: 180). Instead, my research has demonstrated that the potential benefits of APG activity for both parliamentarians and external actors extend well beyond the exchange of information. Moreover, it is most often these additional motivations that lead both sides to participate in group activities.

3.2 Demonstration effects, innovation, and modularity

Involvement in APGs is mutually beneficial to both politicians and external actors, allowing both sides to pursue a range of goals in a changing political environment. However, the current range of APG activity did not develop at once. New groups are often inspired by the work of those that came before. Yet each also innovates as well, expanding both to new issues and adapting new strategies. Over time such evolution has greatly broadened the scope of issues dealt with by APGs and the tools they employ. It has also made APG activity more attractive to a broader range of parliamentarians. However, rather than a path dependent evolution, this process has been iterative, with established groups also borrowing strategies developed by their newer counterparts. Over time, this trend has led APGs to become increasingly modular, with groups
mixing various organizational structures, administrative arrangements, and tactics as best suits their needs at a given point in time.

The specific decision to establish a new APG is often inspired by the activities of an existing group. In some instances, the new groups hope to emulate the success of established groups by branching out to related issue. As described in Chapter Six, such a trend could particularly be seen among APGs focused on health issues in the UK. In other cases, new APGs are deliberately established to counter the influence of an existing group in the same policy field. Such a situation occurred in the UK when the *All-Party Parliamentary Save the Pub Group* was founded following concerns that the *APPG on Beer* had become too closely aligned with the major brewers at the expense of pub owners and tenants. Some politicians are also serial APG creators, with the success of their initial APG in one sector leading them to create groups in other policy issues.

Demonstration effects were also found between jurisdictions as well. Among Canadian APGs, the creation of the *Steel, Oceans, and Outdoors* caucuses was inspired by parallel groups at the US Congress, while the *All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide* was patterned after a similar body at Westminster. Likewise, the UK *APPG on Cycling* was the model for the *All-Party Cycling Caucus* at the Ontario legislature. In some cases, an organized effort is made to start APGs on the same topic in different legislatures around the world that serve as chapters of a global organization. For instance, global networks of APGs have been created for combating antisemitism, nuclear disarmament, and population and development.

In addition to sparking APG formation, group tactics and different models of group organization can also be spread through demonstration effects. In the UK, the strategy of holding semi-formal inquiries and issuing reports was pioneered by a small number of APGs, and particularly by the *APPG on Antisemitism*. Some of these initial reports received substantial responses from the government, leading to the recent spike in the number of inquiries conducted by other groups hoping to achieve similar success. Similar diffusion can also be seen in organizational terms, with many APGs in the UK having adopted the approach of charging external actors an annual subscription to become “members” and gain access to group meetings.

Yet while new APGs – and new APG activities – are often inspired by those that came before, such imitation is never exact. Instead, groups alter the model to fit their own circumstances and
purposes, setting yet new precedents to inspire others. This gradual innovation has meant that many APGs often have little in common with each other except for some measure of cross-party support for their activities. Likewise, the general term of APG “report” now covers a huge range of activities, from those written exclusively by external researchers to those produced after thorough public consultations and extensive input from parliamentarians.

Not surprisingly, the level of APG diversity is greatest in the UK, which has the largest number of groups in operation. Some British APGs examine broad policy areas, like health or science; others are formed to advocate for a single organization (e.g. the All-Party Parliamentary Friends of the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development). Some have no external secretariat; others have purpose-built secretariat organizations with dedicated staff. Some remain apolitical, serving as discussion forums; others engage in multi-year advocacy campaigns, employing a range of tools like early day motions, backbench business debates, and private members’ bills in pursuit of policy change. Still others avoid politics entirely, instead providing parliamentarians with opportunities to enjoy hobbies. Some barely meet enough to maintain registration status; others hold events almost every other week. Some have elaborate executive structures; others had just two officers. Although the range of the variation is not as great, similar diversity can also be found in the APGs in the other jurisdictions examined.

Importantly, this variability and adaptability of the APG format has facilitated the expansion of APGs to an ever broader range of issues, and encouraged participation by an increasingly diverse range of actors. For instance, several of the APGs established at Westminster in recent years, such as the APPGs on Financial Education for Young People and Ticketing Abuse,

70 The term “Ticketing Abuse” referred to the re-sale of tickets for concerts, sporting events, or other cultural events at inflated prices. 

were specifically created to conduct policy inquiries. Considering that the holding of committee-style inquiries by APGs only became a common occurrence in the past decade, the external actors and parliamentarians engaged with these groups may previously have put their efforts elsewhere, thinking that APGs were more oriented at discussion than at attempts to realize detailed policy change. At the same time, other APGs were still being created to pursue more modest objectives, such as raising awareness on policy issues.
The process of APG evolution is not linear. Rather than branches that grow increasingly apart from each other, with those on one subject bearing no resemblance to those on another, APGs instead show a modular structure. New groups pick from the range of existing models of organization and activities and combine them in different ways. For instance, the Canadian Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care (PCPCC) was established in 2010. It was not directly inspired by a similar group on the subject in another jurisdiction, but formed following the defeat of a private members’ bill that would have legalized assisted suicide. A small group of MPs thought that simply preventing the adoption of assisted suicide was not enough, and that a positive alternative should be provided in the form of enhanced palliative care. They decided to launch an inquiry to explore the issue, but did not follow the format set out by the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism, which had struck a separate panel for its inquiry into antisemitism. Instead, PCPCC members held meetings with civil society in their respective constituencies. Moreover, while the Antisemitism Coalition’s inquiry was funded by external donors, the PCPCC pooled contributions from the office budgets of its members to hire a researcher to draft its inquiry report – an approach that the Canadian All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide had used to hire an intern to operate its secretariat. The PCPCC then received a grant from the Canadian Cancer Society to publish the report.

In organizational terms, the PCPCC similarly used a hybrid structure that borrowed different aspects from existing groups. Like many subject APGs in Canada, the PCPCC had a self-appointed executive. However, while most Canadian subject APGs lack defined memberships, with the events being open to all parliamentarians, the PCPCC limited its membership to parliamentarians who contributed to funding the report. In this way its membership structure more closely resembled that of an inter-country APG, which at the Canadian parliament typically charge a nominal fee to member parliamentarians. Yet unlike the majority of Canadian inter-country APGs, the PCPCC did not seek participation from Senators, with its membership solely composed of MPs. Overall, the PCPCC is best seen as an innovative amalgam of different aspects from past groups rather than a copy of any individual APG.

In addition, such imitation and modularity is not shown only by new APGs, but by existing groups as well. Once a tactic or strategy is developed by one group, it is often will be diffused through the other APGs in operation and mixed with those already in operation. For instance, the
Appg on Autism was founded in 2000. Its first report was a literature review on the impact of autism commissioned by the group in 2001. Over the following years it then produced two reports based on surveys of the services offered by local authorities. However, in 2009, following the emergence of APG inquiries as a new tactic for influence, it too issued a report based on a committee-style inquiry that featured oral evidence sessions and written submissions from external groups (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Autism, 2009). Then in 2012, it issued a report based on both a committee style inquiry and a survey of parents caring for autistic children, local authority staff, and autism professionals (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Autism, 2012b).

The growth of APGs has occurred because of contextual changes that made engagement with the groups more attractive for both parliamentarians and external actors. However, this convergence of interests on the benefits of APGs has been greatly enabled by their gradual evolution. The ongoing innovation in group activities, organizational structures, funding approaches, and other aspects of the format served to expand the range of parliamentarians and external actors who found that working through APGs could help them to achieve their goals. In particular, this expansion has been facilitated by the flexibility of the APG approach. Rather than fixing on a single model, the various aspects of the APG format have developed separately, with both new and existing groups combining different elements in a modular fashion that best suits their particular needs.

3.3 Addition to the standard practices of parliamentary action

The ongoing evolution of the APG format has gradually broadened the range of parliamentarians and external actors who see APGs as a useful tool for pursuing their objectives. However, the spread of the APG format has also been helped by its acceptance as a standard tool political advocacy for both politicians and external actors. This acceptance has not only made the creation of an APG increasingly appear as a legitimate course of action, but has also created the impression among some parliamentarians and external actors that they should create APGs on issues that they are concerned with. In this context, the creation of an APG is no longer only a tool for achieving change. Rather, it becomes an end in itself since it grants a symbolic importance to an issue and allows lobbyists and parliamentarians to appear active even if the existence of the APG is unlikely to result in any substantial change.
The increasing acceptance of APGs is perhaps best illustrated in the Canadian context, which has seen a substantial change in attitudes towards the use of such bodies over time. In 1995, Liberal MP Paul Zed appeared before the Subcommittee on Private Member’s Business to explain why the bill that he had introduced on behalf of the All-Party Sugar Caucus, one of the first subject APGs at the Canadian Parliament, should be eligible for debate. In response to questioning from Reform Party MP Randy White, Mr. Zed defended not only the bill, but the caucus itself:

Let’s not sugar coat it; he doesn’t like the bill. To be candid, I’m not sure he appreciates or even likes the initiative of the sugar caucus itself, because it’s not necessarily within our tradition of Canadian parliamentary democracy to have caucuses that bridge party lines. I think, Mr. Chairman, that’s a fair statement. The only other example in this House is a steel caucus.

So we are attempting, in my view, to show, to the Canadian public at least, that there are a number of members of Parliament from different regions, from different provinces, representing different political parties, who regularly have focused on a very specific problem: the Canadian sugar industry (Zed, 1995b, emphasis added).

The recent growth of APGs in Canada indicates that they are no longer viewed as an exception to Canada’s parliamentary tradition. As noted in in Chapter Seven, nearly 50 percent of Canadian MPs serving in the 41st Parliament (2011-2015) held membership in at least one subject-focused APG. Moreover, this figure was based only on partial data and so likely underestimates the true value. Yet even with this growing participation, APG have yet to become the standard tool for Canadian parliamentarians wishing to coordinate collective action on policy issues among backbenchers. Instead, as described in Chapter Five, APGs must still regularly compete with intra-party caucuses as the preferred method for organizing. For instance, between at least a dozen intra-party caucuses were created within the governing Conservative party 2006 and 2015 on topics including biotechnology, crystal meth, energy, forestry, grains and oilseeds, marine issues, mining and pipelines, and post-secondary education. This dynamic reflected the reluctance of parliamentarians to fully collaborate with members of other parties, particularly on matters of legislative strategy, or if doing so could reveal potentially embarrassing gaps in their own knowledge of a policy issue. Government backbenchers were also very reluctant to take part in any activity with the potential to publicly embarrass the government. Knowing this, some lobbyists preferred to meet with separate party caucuses in hopes of obtaining a more fulsome dialogue. However, despite this mixed acceptance of subject-groups, APGs do appear to have
become the standard tool for Canadian parliamentarians seeking to improve relations with other countries and diaspora communities.

By comparison, legislators at Queen’s Park do not trust themselves even to manage inter-country APGs, with the province’s involvement in inter-parliamentary associations being primarily managed by the Speaker of the Legislature to ensure that such groups are not politicized. On the subject group side, Ontario legislators have also been more apt to form intra-party caucuses on policy issues than APGs. The very small number of APGs at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario indicates that the creation of such groups is even less accepted as standard practice in the province than it is in Ottawa.

This skepticism and distrust experienced by subject APGs in Ottawa contrasts sharply with the broad acceptance that APGs at Westminster have enjoyed for at least the last 30 years. While imposing progressively stronger disclosure and transparency requirements, parliamentarians have consistently responded to concerns over lobbying and APGs by supporting the legitimacy of APGs and specifically their relations with external actors. This trend can be seen in the following quotations from parliamentary reports investigating APG activity at the British Parliament:

All-party groups have become a recognised part of parliamentary life, though they have no direct connection with the House (Select Committee on House of Commons (Services), 1984, quoted in Kelly and Yousaf, 2014)

We share the Commissioner’s view that APGs fulfil a valuable role as forums in which Members of both Houses and those interested in a particular subject may meet to exchange information and views and to advance a particular cause. Assistance from outside interests frequently has a part to play in helping such groups to achieve their objectives (United Kingdom. House of Commons. Committee on Standards and Privileges, 2006: 3).

We do not view APGs as an area of activity for which the Houses should apologise. They can enable Members of both Houses, working together, to inform themselves about specific subjects, make common cause on issues, and – perhaps most importantly - respond to outside concerns and have direct contact with those who express them. We were struck by the commitment of Members, and those outside Parliament, to APGs and note how effective they can be in raising issues with the government. We are also aware of this from our personal experience. A glance through the weekly All-Party Notices shows the quality of the speakers these meetings attract and the diversity of issues under discussion. At a time when
politicians are felt by some to be remote we must not cut ourselves off from the wider world (Straw et al., 2012).

The same sentiment can be also be found in the review of APG activity produced by the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee at the Scottish Parliament:

The Cross-Party Group system forms an important part of the work of MSPs and Cross-Party Groups undertake very valuable work, allowing for information sharing and collaboration within the policy community and providing MSPs with information that aids them in scrutinising the Scottish Government in committees, in the chamber and through written questions (2012: 1).

Together these reports demonstrate that forming and participating in APGs is now part of the standard set of practices for backbench members at both Holyrood and Westminster who wish to engage in collective action and collaborate with stakeholders on a policy issue. Rather than a liability, the reports present the engagement between parliamentarians and external actors that occurs through APGs as beneficial, helping legislators in the UK not to become “cut… off from the wider world” and those in Scotland to undertake “collaboration within the policy community.”

This addition of APGs to the standard set of tools for political advocacy in Scotland and the UK can also be seen in the continual growth in the proportion of parliamentarians involved in group activities. As detailed in Chapter Seven, by 2014, nearly every elected legislator in the two parliaments who was eligible to participate in APG activities was a member of at least one group, if not an officer as well. As noted in Chapter Eight, such acceptance can also be seen in the growing number of APGs that receive their secretariat services from lobbying firms on behalf of an external client. Indeed, such lobby firms appear to have facilitated the addition of APGs to the standard set of advocacy tools by suggesting the creation of new groups to their clients. Various lobbying manuals also present APGs as an effective way to connect with parliamentarians.

However, the acceptance of APGs into the standard set of tools employed by parliamentarians and external actors has meant that the groups are not only seen as legitimate parts of the parliamentary landscape in the UK and Scotland, but also that parliamentarians and external actors increasingly view them as something that they should create to demonstrate that given
issues are being taken seriously with the political system, or to establish themselves as the leading actors in the area in question. As a result, establishing APGs has in many ways become an end in itself, with the act of creation allowing both external actors and parliamentarians to signal the symbolic importance given to an issue, and to demonstrate to their respective constituencies that they are taking action on a subject – even if creating APGs may not be the most efficient way to achieve the desired policy changes or objectives. Thus, to put it another way, APGs have at times become a solution in search of a problem.

A comparison with the early day motions (EDMs) at Westminster is helpful to illustrate this point. As detailed in Chapter Four, EDMs are put forward by backbench MPs to express opinions on particular issues. Once lodged, other MPs can sign on as supporters, making EDMs a way to gauge backbench opinion on a given topic. However, numerous respondents in the UK, including parliamentarians, lobbyists, and APG administrators, indicated that EDMs were widely seen as useless for the purposes of parliamentary advocacy because there were too many (typically over a thousand each year) for any one motion to stand out. Yet like the proverbial bar that no one went to because it was too busy, this statement creates a paradox: why do parliamentarians persist in introducing and signing on to EDMs that are often seen as meaningless? The answer appears to be because they expect – and are expected – to do so. As one APG administrator put it:

So I think EDMs are increasingly viewed as a waste of time… You might get some MPs to sign it which you’ve never engaged with before, but then you do get a lot of MPs who just sign every EDM that just crosses their desk. And so it’s hard to discern where the meaningful engagement is… I think it’s become one of those things that if I was to put one up, I could say to my boss, ‘I’ve done some campaigning because I put an EDM up.’ And then an MP who signs it can say to his constituents, ‘Oh I’ve been involved in this campaign.’ But the actual product out of it isn’t as definable as a debate, or a parliamentary question. (confidential interview, October 2012).

Thus it is in the interests of both parliamentarians and external lobbyists to keep creating and supporting EDMs, even though doing so on a large scale has generally robbed them of meaning.

As another one of the standard lobbying tools, APGs are often created along with EDMs as part of the same lobbying campaigns, and often with a similar lack of regard as to whether the groups
will actually be effective tools. For instance, when asked if her constituents ever pressured her to join an APG, one MP replied:

There will probably be a campaign, not by the constituents, but a general campaign, where the constituent will be approached by the campaign group and will have been told, ‘Write to your MP. Ask him or her to sign this EDM, ask a question about this, show support, and join the all-party group.’ So the lobbyists set up the all-party group – no, so the lobbyists through a member Parliament set up the all-party group, then the lobbyists write to all members of Parliament, or... the lobbyists get everyone who supports the campaign to write to their member of Parliament (confidential interview, October 2012).

In the same way as EDMs, this continued expansion in the number of groups is seen to reduce the influence of the APG system as a whole, particularly if the new groups are formed on relatively frivolous topics. As a member of the Lords put it, “The sheer expansion then diminishes the impact of each individual one. It’s a bit like early day motions in the Commons, that are in such great number that it dilutes the impact that any one is likely to have... It’s pretty analogous, because some [EDMs] are serious, and others are, ‘Well done to the local football team.’ Which is a bit like some of the all-party groups” (Confidential Interview, November 2012). Similar worries over dilution were expressed by an MSP at Holyrood:

We all try and attend as many [meetings] as we can. The problem we have is – and I think this is a problem within the Scottish Parliament, is we’ve probably got too many CPGs. And the reason I say that is because then we can’t attend the number that’s coming in. And I actually feel quite bad that you’ve maybe got four or five CPG events on an evening – there’s no way you can attend five. So you may have to be very selective and you try and prioritize. But the other thing is you may have had an interest in two or three of those CPGs that are happening on the same evening, so then you’ve really got to think, ‘I didn’t attend that one the last time, and I can go to this one this time’ (confidential interview, December 2012).

APGs therefore appear to be to some extent victims of their own success. Their ability to foster relationships between parliamentarians and stakeholders and to secure policy change led them to be accepted as part of the standard toolkit for political advocacy. Yet such acceptance in turn caused the creation of ever more APGs, at times for little reason other than the perception that creating a new group was something that external actors and parliamentarians should do. Each new group further stretches parliamentarians’ resources and time, and increases the competition for meeting rooms, debating time, and media attention.
This reality can be seen clearly in both Scotland and the UK, where APGs continue to be created despite pleas from parliamentary authorities in both jurisdictions that there are already too many in operation. For instance, at Westminster the trend has been towards the creation of APGs for ever more specific policy issues, such that there are now over 25 separate APGs on topics that directly relate to children, young people, and their parents or guardians. Similar developments are also evident among health groups at both Westminster and Holyrood. In addition, the idea that each country should have its own APG seems to have been accepted by both diplomats and parliamentarians in Canada and the UK, as evidenced by the founding of groups for such small countries as Moldova and Brunei, neither of which has substantial trade relations or diaspora populations living in Canada.

The one saving grace of the APG format appears to be that unlike EDMs, signing on is not necessarily the end of parliamentarians’ engagement. As long as each APG has a few parliamentarians who are willing to commit their time to conduct inquiries, hold parliamentary debates, or engage with ministers, APGs can still achieve substantial results. Indeed, some of the most innovative and effective advocacy ever conducted by APGs has occurred in recent years even as the number of groups continued to climb. This is true not only true of the various British APPGs highlighted in this research, such as those on Cycling, Fair Fuel for Motorists and Hauliers, and Hunger and Food Poverty, but can also be seen in the “Stroke Charter” developed in 2013 by the CPG on Heart Disease at the Scottish Parliament, and the various private members’ initiatives supported by the Canadian Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care.

In contrast, those APGs that were created primarily out of the belief that an APG should be formed on a given topic – as opposed to accomplishing a given objective like obtaining policy change or seeking to build awareness on a particular topic – are unlikely to secure more than the

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71 These include the APGs on Adoption and Fostering; Boarding Schools; Cannabis and Children; Cardiac Risk in the Young; Child Abduction; Child and Youth Crime; Child Health and Vaccine Preventable Diseases; Child Protection; Children in Wales; Children; Children’s Media and the Arts; Conception to Age Two – The First 1001 Days; Dyslexia and Specific Learning Difficulties; Family Law and the Court of Protection; Fatherhood; Financial Education for Young People; Education; Education Governance and Leadership; Fit and Healthy Childhood; Learning Disability; Looked after Children and Care Leavers; Music Education; Parents and Families; Runaway and Missing Children and Adults; Sixth Form Colleges; Street Children; Students; Sure Start Children’s Centres; Young Disabled People; Youth Affairs; and Youth Unemployment.
minimum level of commitment that is required to maintain their registration status. Such groups are more likely to be criticized as “talking shops” or those that “exist in name only.” While these groups may serve some signaling purpose for the parliamentarians that join, and perhaps give some status to those that lead them, they would appear to be of greater use to the public relations professionals employed by the external actors that pushed for their creation.

4 Reasons for cross-national variation in prevalence and function

While the number of APGs in each jurisdiction examined has grown in recent years, sharp gaps in APG prevalence continue to exist from one to the next. At first glance, such differences may appear to reflect only the variations in the number of parliamentarians who serve in each assembly, with the British parliament having both the most members and most APGs, while Ontario comes last on both scores. However, when APG prevalence is examined in proportionate terms, a more complicated picture emerges. As was shown in Table 1.1, when standardized in terms of the number of APGs per legislator, Scotland moves from third place in absolute terms to either second place (if one standardizes by elected legislators) or first (if one standardizes based on all legislators, elected and appointed).\(^2\) The two most similarly sized legislatures, Ontario and Scotland, also show the largest gap in group prevalence, suggesting that group formation is influenced by factors beyond the number of legislators. There are also strong differences in the makeup of the APGs in each jurisdiction, with inter-country groups greatly outnumbering subject groups in Canada while the reverse is true in the UK. Similar variations can also be seen in the role played by APGs in different legislatures, with those in the UK being more likely to conduct relatively assertive policy advocacy, while those in Scotland and Canada serve more as forums for discussion. Accounting for such discrepancies is essential if the comprehensive theory of APG growth put forward here is to applicable to multiple cases.

This study argues that the expansion of APGs in recent years been driven by three developments: contextual changes in the political context that led to a convergence of interests between parliamentarians and external actors on the benefits of APG activity; the gradual evolution of

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\(^2\) The large number of peers in the House of Lords who do not participate in debates on a regular basis makes it difficult to determine what number of legislators to use when standardizing across jurisdictions.
APGs into a modular tool that could be adapted to a wide range of circumstances; and the addition of APGs into the standard toolkit of political advocacy. As described above, this last development has yet to take place in Canada or Ontario, in large part due to the presence of ongoing tensions and distrust between the parties in the two jurisdictions. While other forces are also at work, differences in the levels of party discipline and cohesion in each legislature appear to be the primary factors shaping variations in both APG prevalence and the roles they play across the cases. Specifically the willingness of backbench parliamentarians in the UK to break with their own parties on legislative votes has facilitated the expansion of APGs at Westminster and allowed them to engage in more aggressive policy advocacy, while the greater party discipline in Canada and Ontario has both restricted APG expansion and limited the scope of their activities. At the same time, the high levels of cohesion and voting unity among the parties at Holyrood should theoretically have limited the proliferation of APGs in that jurisdiction as well, yet the linkage of APGs to ideals of “new politics” has led to their acceptance of part of the Parliament’s institutional structure, although only on the condition that the groups restrict their policy advocacy.

As informal bodies that are neither created by nor accountable to the legislatures in which they operate, APGs gain legitimacy from the fact that they mobilize parliamentarians across party lines. The general need for ongoing participation by at least one representative from each major party theoretically gives the members of those parties the power to veto not only the creation of new groups, but also any specific activities that existing groups may wish to undertake. As noted by Ringe et al. (2013), this potential for vetoes along partisan lines explains why some groups explicitly decide to focus solely on information sharing: while members of different parties can agree that an issue is important and that parliamentarians should be better informed, they disagree on what actions to take as a solution. Yet as one Canadian MP stressed, whether it is openly stated or not, most APGs tend to benefit the opposition parties (confidential interview, April 2013). Indeed, except for those focused solely on symbolic representation or the personal enjoyment of parliamentarians, most APGs would not need to exist if there were no faults in a government’s policies or no outstanding issues in its diplomatic relationships. Instead, the presence of an APG, even one that focuses solely on the sharing of information, increases the odds that information will come forward which casts the government in a negative light or that at
least suggests that it could take further actions. It also increases the resources available to backbenchers to engage in scrutiny.

In this environment, the likelihood that APGs can be created on a given issue is contingent upon the supply of governing party members who are willing to take part. While there certainly can be moments of cross-party tension at Westminster, many respondents stressed that backbenchers from all parties can easily cooperate with each other in order to scrutinize the executive and review legislation. One journalist particularly highlighted the absence of partisanship in select committees, and stressed their role in fostering cooperation among backbenchers:

The select committee system here is actually one of the ways in which the virus of cooperation has been introduced, because most of the committees most of the time are relatively non-partisan in the way they operate. The chairs of select committees try very, very hard not to get into a situation where there are minority reports, for example. They try to find a way that everybody can sign up to such things. Now sometimes that can mean diluting things to the point of meaninglessness, but on most occasions they try and get some kind of workable and decent compromise (confidential interview, October 2012).

Party discipline is also less severe at Westminster than in other jurisdictions, with backbench members in all three major parties regularly rebelling against their own parties’ official positions on legislative votes (Cowley and Stuart, 2012, 2014). Such rebellions have become more frequent in recent years, to some extent mirroring the growth in APGs.

In comparison to Canada, the parliamentary parties in the UK also have much weaker mechanisms for channeling backbench input into government and party decisions. In Ottawa, all elected members of each parliamentary party, including both backbenchers and front benchers, meet together each week that parliament is sitting. Until recently, each party’s Senators were also included in the gatherings. In contrast, the backbench and front bench members of the British Conservative Party meet separately from each other, with backbenchers themselves being divided into the 1922 Committee, which represents the interests of Conservative MPs, and the Association of Conservative Peers. This arrangement fosters a sense of independence among Conservative backbenchers, who are often among the sharpest critics of their own front bench. Moreover, while the meetings of the Parliamentary Labour Party do include both frontbench and backbench members (and both MPs and peers), past research has found them to be much less effective at integrating and responding to backbench views than the equivalent party caucuses in
Canada (Garner and Letki, 2005). Indeed, Garner and Letki argue that the failure of the British Labour party to effectively engage with its backbench members fueled the surge in rebellions on legislative votes witnessed during the premiership of Tony Blair. By comparison, they point to the responsiveness of the Canadian Liberal party caucus under Prime Minister Jean Chrétien for helping to minimize backbench dissent during his administration.

This context in which backbench British parliamentarians are habituated to working across party lines, lack consistent means to influence party policy, and are willing to challenge (if not openly embarrass) their own party leaders has been highly conducive to the expansion of APG activity at Westminster. Government parliamentarians during Conservative, Labour, and coalition administrators have been willing to support both the growth in the number of groups in operation and their use for policy advocacy even on highly sensitive issues. An extreme example of this trend is the support given by Labour government backbenchers to the APPG on Extraordinary Rendition, which was established in 2005 to investigate allegations that the British government assisted the extraordinary rendition programme operated by the United States – allegations that were highly damaging to the Blair administration. While the government denied any involvement, using parliamentary questions, freedom of information requests, and even legal proceedings in the US, the group gradually secured details about British participation in the programme (Bowater, 2012).

In comparison to Westminster, the APG systems in Canada, Ontario, and Scotland are significantly restrained by high levels of party discipline. In place of backbench autonomy, all three feature high levels of party cohesion in legislative votes, with rebellions by government backbenchers being quite rare, especially on matters of government policy. Moreover, this cohesion often continues into legislative committees as well. Under normal circumstances, reports by standing committee at the Canadian Parliament regularly break along party lines, with opposition members issuing minority reports that dissent from the views of the government majority. During the two Conservative minority governments from 2006 to 2011, the committee system at times degenerated into an open battlefield, with the government going to extraordinary lengths to prevent committee actions that might lead to criticism of its policies. This included instances where government MPs staged filibusters to prevent witnesses from testifying, or where committee chairs failed to attend meetings to prevent them from taking place at all (CanWest News Service, 2007). The government whip reportedly even developed a 200 page
handbook for its members on how obstruct committee proceedings (Bryden, 2007; Docherty, 2010). While the functioning of legislative committees in Ottawa improved somewhat following the election of a Conservative majority government in 2011, partisan conflict was still very much present, such as when the NDP staged a filibuster at the Standing Committee on Public Safety to secure more hearings on proposed anti-terror legislation (Leblanc, 2015). NDP also prevented travel by any standing committees for over a year after being unable to secure government support to hold hearings around the country on proposed changes to Canada’s election laws (Aiello, 2015). Such tensions also spread into other aspects of Parliament as well, with Canadian MPs increasingly using their members’ statements to attack the other parties rather than raising policy or constituency concerns (Blidook and Byrne, 2013).

As noted above, the cohesiveness of the parties at the Canadian parliament is also facilitated by the presence of strong intra-party caucuses that give the backbench parliamentarians in each party regular access to their party leaders and front bench teams. In addition to plenary meetings with all elected members, these caucuses aggregate input through a series of sub-caucuses based both on geography and policy issues. Although not giving each government backbench member a veto over every party decision, those who invest time in developing expertise on specific policy issues and building coalitions of support from other members can use the intra-party caucuses as tools to secure policy change (Hilderman and Thomas, 2013). Furthermore, the Harper government also created a series of “Ministerial Caucus Advisory Committees” for all Ministers. The committees were composed of backbenchers who had to be consulted before new policy initiatives could be approved by cabinet. This system brought backbench members into policy discussions at a much earlier point, helping to foster a sense of “belonging and importance” within their party (Wilson, 2015).

This combination of ongoing conflict between parties and relatively effective mechanisms for channelling backbench input has inhibited the emergence of APGs in Canada. Government backbenchers in Ottawa are particularly cautious about collaborating with members of other parties for fear that an APG will be used to criticise the government. In many instances, they would rather work through intra-party caucuses believing that it would allow a freer exchange of ideas, especially around political strategy. Consequently, APGs tend to form primarily on areas that feature a substantial degree of cross-party consensus, such as relations with other countries or general policy areas like tourism. As one government backbencher replied when asked why
some issues are addressed through intra-party caucuses and others are addressed through APGs, “Well, I think it depends on whether the particular opposition party, or a particular governing party feels that they want to have some politically sensitive conversations around a particular industry or interest. And then you know if it ends up being where the parties diverge, then you would find independent caucuses developing” (confidential interview, November 2013).

Moreover, even when APGs form at the Canadian Parliament, government parliamentarians often insist that their actions must be limited to avoid conflict with the government. As another government backbencher described,

as a member of the governing party it’s always a little more awkward when you’re in a cross party caucus, when the party opposite becomes aggressive with issues that are intended to embarrass the government. That’s what minimizes our effectiveness moving forward as cross party caucuses. So my advice would be before going to do a cross party caucus, let’s make sure were aware of the limitations the government members are under, and when you begin to put us in an awkward spot as individuals of the government, and expect us to support the agenda of the caucus, in opposition to our government, that’s a little bit of an awkward spot (confidential interview, November 2013).

These limitations mean that most APGs in Ottawa serve primarily as discussion forums, engaging in advocacy only when there is clear agreement to do so. For government backbenchers such restrictions mean that forming intra-party caucuses on policy issues instead of APGs presents few short-term drawbacks and possibly significant advantages. Intra-party caucuses still provide MPs with the ability to signal to constituents and demonstrate the symbolic importance of given issues. The leaders of intra-party caucuses likewise can still benefit from feelings of status and relevance, and government backbenchers may be more willing to push for substantial change by working behind the scenes through an intra-party caucus than they would be through an APG. Over the long term though, such groups do face distinct disadvantages vis-à-vis APGs, with the MPs losing any influence they might have through the caucus following a change in government. By comparison, government backbenchers who invest in building support among parliamentarians from all parties may be able to maintain leadership positions within APGs even after a change in government. Moreover, the policy compromises developed through APGs may prove more enduring after a change in administration, and some external actors feel more comfortable engaging with APGs rather than intra-party caucuses for fear of being seen as partisan.
However, while partisan tensions do restrict APG activity in Canada, there are also signs that excessive partisanship can actually prompt the creation of new APGs if formal institutions become too caught up in the conflict to function effectively. One of the most surprising trends in APG creation in Canada is that the number of groups increased sharply during the period of Conservative party government from 2006 to 2015, a period that is widely seen to have witnessed an increase in the level of discord between the parties. As noted above, such tensions regularly frustrated the work of parliamentary committees, with even largely uncontentious policy issues at times getting caught up in the struggle, leading politicians and stakeholders to look for alternative venues through which to pursue policy change. In this vein, several informants noted that the Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care was established in part to ensure that the issue did not become caught up in partisan quarrelling. Similar desires were also said to have driven the creation of All-Party Climate Change Caucus, the All-Party Shipbuilding Caucus, and the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity.

Importantly, this use of APGs as a vehicle to bypass partisan conflict in formal institutions is distinct from their ability to facilitate a more open discussion among parliamentarians and stakeholders. Members of every legislature studied stressed that a major advantage of APGs was that their meetings usually took place away from the formality and media pressure that is present in the parliamentary debates or committees. Even parliamentarians in the UK, which had the most collegial relations between politicians and the greatest level of committee independence from government, stressed that discussions could be more free flowing when held in private. For instance, while noting that the Health Select Committee continued to function effectively during the debate over the controversial reforms to the National Health System put forward by the Conservative - Liberal Democrat coalition, several respondents indicated that the All-Party Parliamentary Health Group provided a useful venue for additional discussions. In particular the group, which is closed to the general public and operates under Chatham House rules, was used for meetings with parliamentarians as part of the “listening exercise” launched by the government following negative reaction to the initial draft of the bill.

The relationship between the parties at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario closely resembles that at the Canadian Parliament, with tension between the parties and unity in voting being the norm. As in Ottawa, each party at Queen’s Park also holds regular caucus meetings of its elected
members. Respondents from both the government and the opposition described such meetings as highly effective at facilitating exchanges between party leaders and rank-and-file MPPs. In fact, it was surprising just how positive MPPs were regarding the influence of caucus, as can be seen in the following quotations:

It’s been my experience – whether it’s the former Premier Mr. McGuinty or the current Premier…certainly the current Premier Kathryn Wynne encourages all members to express their views very directly every Tuesday at caucus (Liberal MPP, confidential interview, April 2014).

I speak up on everything. I think that caucus is a great way for a couple of hours a week – it’s a great way [for the party leaders] to get the word out, and they get to hear back what you’re hearing in your constituency… We meet every week and we’re all united. We want to take over the government and that’s why we want an election (Conservative MPP, confidential interview, April 2014).

It is also the case that there are virtually no true government backbenchers in Ontario, with all but one of the government MPPs in 2014 holding either a full cabinet post or a “parliamentary assistant” position – a kind of junior ministerial role that is tasked with helping ministers to secure passage of legislation and standing in for ministers at events that they are unable to attend (Thomas and White, 2015). Moreover, when it came to power in 2003, the Liberal government developed the practice of assigning all government backbenchers to cabinet policy committees, giving them a stake in policy formation (Tregebov, 2011). The cumulative result of these tools for backbench influence is backbench dissent in the Ontario legislature is virtually non-existent, especially on the government side.

As described above, there is little tradition of APG activity or cross-party cooperation at the Ontario Legislature, even for inter-country APGs. Instead, legislators’ first instinct is to keep policy discussions within their own parties. The few APGs that have formed focus on largely non-partisan issues (e.g. cycling, lung health), but even they still must limit themselves primarily to sharing information. As one government MPP stated, “There's no question because of the situation of the adversarial, partisan politics nature of this profession, there are times in which it makes it hard. So somebody will creep towards the line and start taking a shot at the government for being too slow - those kinds of things – and then that will be reined in to say, ‘No, no, we're just talking about the facts’” (confidential interview, March 2014).
As for the Scottish Parliament, the presence of so many active APGs is one of the most surprising findings of this study. In their examination of APG prevalence in 45 advanced democracies, Ringe et al. (2013) found that majoritarian jurisdictions were more likely to have APGs than those with proportional or mixed systems, a difference they attributed to the greater potential for majoritarian politicians to cultivate a personal vote and signal to their constituents. Among PR and mixed jurisdictions, APGs were more common in those with a larger than average number of legislators or parties, both of which were seen to increase the need for APGs as a tool for political coordination. Indeed, Ringe et al. found APGs in all four of the PR or mixed jurisdictions that were above average on both characteristics, but just one of the eight that fell below average on both measures. Moreover, Ringe et al. reported that the APGs in that one case, New Zealand, were “neither institutionalized nor very influential” (2013: 68).

With only 129 members and an average effective number of parliamentary parties (ENPP) of just 3.38 over its first four sessions (Clark, 2012), Scotland falls well below the averages from Ringe et al.’s study (287 and 4.06 respectively). The fact that such an elaborate APG system took root makes it an important case in which to explore how non-institutional factors, such as political culture, can drive APG creation.

In contrast to their counterparts at Westminster, backbench MSPs at Holyrood are much less likely to rebel against their party whips. As with Canada and Ontario, this unity appears to result from the ability of the parties to efficiently receive and respond to input from backbenchers, with the respective party groups holding weekly meetings when the Parliament is in session. On the government side, all backbench members are expected to be present and at least one senior cabinet member, such as the First Minister, Deputy First Minister, or Cabinet Secretary for Justice, will attend to present a report on political developments. Backbenchers then have an opportunity to ask questions and express their views, which is reported back to cabinet.

One SNP backbencher reported that these meetings provided a useful forum for exchanging views between the front and back benches, and echoed the Ontario MPP quoted above in highlighting the party unity fostered by the gatherings. However, he also pointed out that the conflict created by the independence question had led MSPs to discipline themselves as well:

[The party group meeting] is chaired by a backbench member of the group. So we have a Convener of the group, a Secretary of the group, and the main item of
business is the report from the government. Backbenchers get to ask questions and if they have views – and sometimes they do have views – they’re not slow in expressing those. So there will be discussion behind the seats. When we come out of that meeting we come out as pretty much a united group…

Very, very little of what is discussed in that meeting ever appears in the press. That’s another sign of the party discipline that we have. It’s not a discipline that is imposed on the backbenchers by the party hierarchy, it’s the discipline each member imposes on himself because they are loyal to the party and what we’re trying to achieve, particularly in reference to the independence referendum in the party discipline. We know that the public don’t have the same fascination and interest in the minutiae of politics day-to-day as the politicians and the activists. So what they do pick up on is that parties are split and they’re having disagreements in public and that is damaging to any political party. They need to be a united party going into a referendum on independence – it’s absolutely critical at this stage (confidential interview, December 2012).

The statistical results in Chapter Seven indicated that SNP members were significantly less likely to participate in APGs as both members and officers, a reality also reflected in the accounts of respondents. One Labour MSP described how it could be challenging to secure participation from SNP members:

The people who are difficult to engage with on health cross-party groups are the SNP… I don’t know whether that’s a feature of being in government, but I know nobody from the SNP ever comes to the CPG [I convene] and I think we actually found it difficult to find somebody. Of course people are trying to create new CPGs all the time. There is somebody trying to create a CPG on [a health condition], someone who works outside the Parliament for [a charity devoted to the health condition] – surprise, surprise. She can’t form the group because she can’t get an SNP member – you have to have somebody from each party (confidential interview, December 2012).

Another MSP from one of the smaller parties reported that new SNP members had been advised not to participate in APGs because they would take up too much time (confidential interview, December 2012).

Overall, participation by SNP members was the limiting factor in APG activity at Holyrood. Yet despite strong party discipline, the presence of an effective structure for backbench input, and strong tensions between the SNP and Labour over the independence referendum, the number of APGs in operation continued to grow, and every SNP member who was eligible belonged to at least one group. This divergence from the focus on intra-party caucuses seen in Ottawa and Queen’s Park would appear to result from the legacy of the consensus-focused ideals of new
politics that guided the Parliament’s creation. While APGs were not included as part of the Parliament’s original design, they began forming shortly after the first elections in 1999, and a formal system of regulation and recognition was soon established. However, the system created diverged from the existing model in place at Westminster: instead of tools for mobilizing backbench parliamentarians with an interest in a given issue, the regulations were based on the premise that APGs could serve as another manifestation of new politics, bringing together MSPs and civil society groups for ongoing policy discussions. Indeed, it was not only permitted but expected that the APGs at Holyrood would have outside actors and individuals as group members.

The result of this early regulatory development has been that APGs in Scotland are often treated as another organ of the Parliament rather than something ad-hoc or informal. This reality can be seen in treatment of APGs on the Scottish Parliament’s webpage. It takes as many clicks to get from the Parliament’s homepage to the section on APGs as it does to the section on formal legislative committees. The information available is extensive, including a public calendar of all group meetings, a full list of group members (including MSPs, organizations, and individuals), minutes of past meetings, and copies of each group’s annual reports. Involvement in cross-party groups is listed on MSPs official biographies along with their committee assignments. By comparison, information on the APGs on the website of the British Parliament is included as a subsection of the page on “Registers of Interests.” The calendar of group meetings is not made public, and no group documents (e.g. reports, minutes, etc.) are provided.

The focus of Scottish APGs on promoting interactions between MSPs and external actors has largely allowed them to avoid becoming caught up in the conflict between the parties. There also appears to be a normative belief among many MSPs that the groups should be used to engage with civil society. Nonetheless, group formation at Holyrood is limited largely to areas on which there is cross-party consensus. As one Labour MSP noted, “Labour and the SNP aren’t divided on many of these issues that cross-party groups meet on – there’s no division between any of the parties… they’re not really party political” (confidential interview, December 2012). Indeed, there are signs that MSPs may have saturated the possible topics for subject-group formation, with most of the new groups created in recent years focusing on geographic issues. Moreover, the groups that do form are quite restricted in their operation, serving as forums for information sharing engagement with external actors rather than for policy activism. In this vein, MSPs
reported that they seldom mentioned their involvement with APGs as a way to signal to their constituents. This avoidance of policy advocacy has at times led to conflict between parliamentarians and external actors wishing for the groups to take a more assertive stance on a given issue.

APGs exist to facilitate collaboration amongst backbench parliamentarians. As such, it is not surprising that the relative prevalence of APGs in a given jurisdiction would be shaped by the prevailing patterns of party discipline and cohesion. The willingness of backbench parliamentarians in the UK to defy their parties on legislative votes and engage in meaningful cross-party cooperation in legislative committees appears to have translated into an openness to engage in APG activity as well, even on issues that are highly sensitive to the government. Conversely, strong party discipline enabled by the presence of effective means for aggregating and responding to backbench input has limited the expansion of APGs in Canada and Ontario, and led those groups that have formed to focus primarily on information sharing rather than advocacy. All things being equal, the high levels of party discipline also found in Scotland would likely have produced the same result seen in the two Canadian cases. However, the early establishment of the APGs at Holyrood as vehicles for engaging and consulting with civil society rather than policy advocacy has allowed their numbers to grow, although the range of their activities remains limited relative to those in the UK.

5 Conclusion and discussion

Past models of APG activity have been based either on a narrow range of countries, or have focused primarily on a narrow range of APG activities. They have also largely failed to explore the factors that shape engagement in APGs by the external actors who support their activities. As a result these models cannot fully account for the expansion of APG activity in legislatures worldwide in recent years, especially in those jurisdictions that are based on the Westminster model.

This study argues that APG expansion has resulted from three major factors. First, APGs have helped backbench parliamentarians and external lobbyists to pursue their respective objectives in the face of increasing demands on the political system. The relationship between the two sets of actors is symbiotic, with APGs allowing them to accomplish more together than they could separately. Second, the APG format itself has greatly evolved over time, transforming into a
modular platform that can be adapted to a diverse array of situations. This flexibility has progressively expanded the range of parliamentarians and external actors who find that working through APGs can help achieve their objectives, and has also allowed existing groups to innovate and adapt to changing circumstances. Finally, the growth of APGs has also resulted from the gradual acceptance of APG activity as a standard tool for political advocacy. This acceptance not only increased the legitimacy (and hence influence) of the groups that formed, but also created the impression among both parliamentarians and external actors that establishing APGs was something that they should do as part of a comprehensive government relations campaign, even if the groups would not necessarily be the most effective way to achieve the desired outcomes.

These factors also help to account for the differences in the relative prevalence of APGs and the scope of their activities across the legislatures examined. While demonstration effects have enabled APGs to spread to each case, the APG format has yet to become a standard tool for political advocacy in Canada and especially in Ontario. Instead, strong party discipline and the presence of effective means for backbench participation in the development of party policy has led parliamentarians in these cases to rely more on intra-party caucuses as a way to pursue their objectives and engage with stakeholders. Moreover, those APGs that are established tend to focus on areas of relative cross-party consensus, and typically must limit their activities to avoid accusations of attacking the government. However, while similar levels of party discipline and mechanisms for backbench input at Holyrood should theoretically reduce the prevalence in APGs there, their large scale expansion has been possible due to the Parliament’s regulatory regime that early on established APGs as bodies for consultation with civil society, not political advocacy. By comparison, the lower levels of party cohesion in the UK and absence of tools for integrating backbench concerns have not only enabled widespread growth among APGs, but has allowed them to be very assertive in pursuing policy change.

Looking forward, the true test of this model will be to see how APGs are affected by changing political dynamics in each jurisdiction. In Scotland, many respondents complained that the lead up to the 2014 independence referendum had been accompanied by an increase in partisan tensions that was undermining the work of the parliamentary committees. Rather than working by consensus, committees were increasingly dividing on party lines, with SNP backbenchers being accused of attempting to amend reports to remove criticisms of the government, and to
prevent certain witnesses from testifying (Gardham, 2014). While such conflicts had not produced the same level of dysfunction at times witnessed at the Canadian Parliament, several informants indicated that APGs were the only aspect of the Parliament that was still functioning according to the ideals of new politics. Given the increased polarization seen in the results of Scotland’s 2016 election and the prospect of another independence referendum, it remains to be seen if the operation of APGs at Holyrood will either be undermined by rising partisan tensions, or emerge as an alternative venue for parliamentarians frustrated by partisan gridlock in the Parliament’s formal institutions. Conversely, the 2015 election of a new Canadian government officially committed to more inclusive policy making and backbench autonomy could potentially increase the number of APGs in operation by broadening the range of issues they can safely address while maintaining cross-party support. In this vein, at least two new subject-focused APGs have already formed – the *Parliamentary Friends of the Kurds* and the *Raoul Wallenberg All-Party Parliamentary Caucus for Human Rights*.

At a more practical level, ongoing concerns regarding the influence of external actors on the APG activities also have yet to be fully resolved. The new registration system introduced at Westminster in 2015 requires APGs to estimate the value of in-kind assistance, and has revealed that many APGs receive far more support than it previously appeared. For instance, the registry published in December 2015 revealed that the group with the most external assistance was actually the *APPG on Extraordinary Rendition*, which received £231,751 from Hogan Lovells LLP in pro-bono legal work. Prior to the new requirements, the group’s registry entry had stated only that the firm had provided assistance, without specifying the amount. Similarly, while the *APPG on Apprenticeships* had previously declared only that “Connect Communications (a consultancy) is paid by its client Emta Awards Ltd to act as the group’s secretariat,” under the new system it disclosed that this support amounted to £77,251. The political system in the UK has yet to fully react to such new information.

However, by far the largest outstanding concerns regarding external influence on APGs are in Canada and Ontario, neither of which requires groups to disclose any external support, either in cash or in-kind. Ironically, the only subject group in either jurisdiction to provide any reporting on the external support it received, the *Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism (CPCCA)*, actually received extensive criticism from both journalists and academics. The CPCCA was founded in 2009 to conduct an inquiry into the state of antisemitism
in Canada, and raised $127,078 from external donors to support the initiative (Geddes, 2011). However, while the funds were managed on the group’s behalf by an independent NGO, the Parliamentary Centre, the donors themselves were never made public, leading Cairns and Ferguson (2011) to attack its independence and legitimacy:

Although it mimics familiar liberal-democratic forms, the CPCCA is neither an official public inquiry nor a Royal Commission. It is not a parliamentary committee: despite being composed of 21 sitting Members of Parliament, the CPCCA was not struck by Canada’s House of Commons or Senate, nor is it responsible to either chamber of Parliament. The source of the coalition’s funding is unclear, as is its process of selecting witnesses (2011: 416).

While applying to the CPCCA, the self-selecting nature of APGs and the lack of disclosure requirements mean that the same charges could be levelled at nearly every other APG in both jurisdictions. Until requirements are introduced mandating the disclosure of support received from external actors, observers will be unable to fully evaluate the extent to which APGs in Canada and Ontario are serving to improve engagement with stakeholders, or have been captured by particular interests.


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All-Party Parliamentary Group on Diabetes, All-Party Parliamentary Group on Heart Disease, 


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### Appendix I:
List of inter-country all-party groups at the Canadian Parliament by year of founding, current to 41st Parliament (2011-2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/Region</th>
<th>Full Name</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Founded</th>
<th>Dissolved</th>
<th>Refounded</th>
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<td>Canada-Dubai Parliamentary Association</td>
<td>Friendship group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>Canada-Moldova Parliamentary Association</td>
<td>Friendship group</td>
<td>2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nordic-Baltic</td>
<td>Canada-Nordic-Baltic Parliamentary Friendship Group</td>
<td>Friendship group</td>
<td>2012</td>
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<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>Canada-Uzbekistan Friendship Group</td>
<td>Friendship group</td>
<td>2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Canada-Georgia Inter-parliamentary Friendship Group</td>
<td>Friendship group</td>
<td>2013</td>
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<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>Canada-Macedonia Parliamentary Friendship Group</td>
<td>Friendship group</td>
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<td>Peru</td>
<td>Canada-Peru Parliamentary Friendship Group</td>
<td>Friendship group</td>
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<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>Canada-Bulgaria Parliamentary Friendship Group</td>
<td>Friendship group</td>
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<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
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<td>Friendship group</td>
<td>2014</td>
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<td>Serbia</td>
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<td>Friendship group</td>
<td>2014</td>
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</table>
## Appendix II:
List of subject all-party groups at the Canadian Parliament by year of founding, current to 41\textsuperscript{st} Parliament (2011-2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Founded</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Primary partner organizations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soviet Jewry</td>
<td>Canadian Parliamentary Friendship Group for Soviet Jewry</td>
<td>Early 1980s</td>
<td>No activity since 1993 election</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global peace and security</td>
<td>Canadian Parliamentarians for Global Action</td>
<td>Mid 1980s</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steel industry</td>
<td>All-Party Steel Caucus</td>
<td>Mid 1980s</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Canadian Steel Producers Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Syrian Jewry</td>
<td>Canadian Parliamentary Friendship Group for Syrian Jewry</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>No activity since 1993 election</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant and food services industry</td>
<td>All-Party Canadian Restaurant &amp; Food Services Caucus</td>
<td>1990s</td>
<td>No activity since 2011 election</td>
<td>Restaurants Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confectionary industry</td>
<td>Confectionary Caucus</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>No activity since 2001 election</td>
<td>Confectionery Manufacturers Association of Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar industry</td>
<td>All-Party National Sugar Caucus</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>No activity since 2008 election</td>
<td>Canadian Sugar Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual exploitation of children and youth</td>
<td>Committee against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Active</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reproductive health</td>
<td>Canadian Association of Parliamentarians for Population and Development</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abortion</td>
<td>Parliamentary Pro-Life Caucus</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Campaign Life Coalition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>Friendship Group of Parliamentarians for UNESCO</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>No activity since 2008 election</td>
<td>Canadian Commission for UNESCO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human Rights</td>
<td>Parliamentary Human Rights Groups</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>No activity since 2004 election</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rail industry</td>
<td>All-Party Rail Caucus</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Canadian Railways Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nuclear disarmament</td>
<td>Parliamentarians for Nuclear Disarmament</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Canadians for a Nuclear Weapons Convention</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sport and physical activity</td>
<td>All-Party Sport and Physical Activity Caucus</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>No activity since 2006 election</td>
<td>Sport Matters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Darfur conflict</td>
<td>Save Darfur Parliamentary Coalition</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>No activity since 2008 election</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Border</td>
<td>Parliamentary Border Caucus</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Active</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Founded</td>
<td>Status</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Genocide and other crimes against humanity</td>
<td>All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide and other Crimes Against Humanity</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Aegis Trust; Montreal Institute for Genocide Studies (MIGS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Juvenile diabetes</td>
<td>Juvenile Diabetes Caucus</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outdoor recreation</td>
<td>Parliamentary Outdoors caucus</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interfaith understanding</td>
<td>All-Party Interfaith Parliamentary Friendship Group</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>International conservation</td>
<td>All-Party International Conservation Caucus</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>International Conservation Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tourism industry</td>
<td>All-Party Tourism Caucus</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Tourism Industry Association of Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shipbuilding industry</td>
<td>All-Party Shipbuilding Caucus</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>No activity since 2010 after release of National Shipbuilding Strategy</td>
<td>Dissolved in 2010 after release of National Shipbuilding Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trent-Severn Waterway</td>
<td>Trent Severn Caucus</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Active</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aboriginal Friendship Centres</td>
<td>Friendship Centres All-Party Caucus</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>National Association of Friendship Centres</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aerospace industry</td>
<td>All-Party Aerospace Caucus</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Aerospace Industries Association of Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anti-Semitism</td>
<td>Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Anti-Semitism</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>No activity since publishing report in 2011</td>
<td>Undisclosed external sponsors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arts industry</td>
<td>All-Party Parliamentary Arts Caucus</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Active</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dementia</td>
<td>All-Party Caucus on Dementia</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>No activity since 2011 election</td>
<td>Alzheimer's Society of Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>Falun Gong</td>
<td>Parliamentary Friends of Falun Gong</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Active</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forestry industry</td>
<td>All-Party Forestry Caucus</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>No activity since 2011 election</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health research</td>
<td>Health Research Caucus</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Research Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>Malaria</td>
<td>All-Party Parliamentary Caucus on Ending Malaria</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Malaria No More Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>BRIC Trade Development Caucus</td>
<td>BRIC Trade Development Caucus</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>No activity since 2011 election</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Founded</td>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Primary partner organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis</td>
<td>HIV/AIDS &amp; TB Parliamentary Caucus</td>
<td>2010</td>
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<td>Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network; Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development; Canadian Treatment Action Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Palliative care and suicide prevention</td>
<td>Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Received financial assistance from Canadian Cancer Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Climate change</td>
<td>All-Party Caucus on Climate Change</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Active</td>
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<tr>
<td>Democracy in Iran</td>
<td>Canadian Parliamentarians for Democracy and Human Rights in Iran</td>
<td>2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Golf industry</td>
<td>Parliamentary Golf Caucus</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>National Allied Golf Associations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mixed Martial Arts</td>
<td>All-Party Mixed Martial Arts Caucus</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Active</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women's issues</td>
<td>All-Party Women's Caucus</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Active</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cleantech industry</td>
<td>Cleantech Caucus</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Active</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oceans</td>
<td>All-Party Oceans Caucus</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>World Wildlife Fund</td>
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<td>Poverty</td>
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<td>2012</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Dignity for all Campaign</td>
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<td>Scouts</td>
<td>Parliamentary Friends of Scouts</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Scouts Canada</td>
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<td>Tamil community</td>
<td>Canada-Tamil Parliamentary Friendship Group</td>
<td>2012</td>
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<td>Beer</td>
<td>Parliamentary Beer Caucus</td>
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<td>Beer Canada</td>
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<td>Active</td>
<td>National Initiative for Eating Disorders</td>
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<td>Canadian Federation of Independent Business</td>
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<td>All-Party Cooperative Caucus</td>
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<td>Co-operatives and Mutuals Canada</td>
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<td>Canadian Men’s Health Foundation</td>
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<td>Space caucus</td>
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<td>Active</td>
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<td>Seniors</td>
<td>All Party Seniors Caucus</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Canadian Medical Association</td>
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