Another Representational Factor?:
An Analysis of Academic Attention to Ideology in Federal Cabinet

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Introduction

Cabinet is a Canadian political institution that presents scholars with many research challenges. The traditions of cabinet secrecy and solidarity have made it extremely difficult to study empirically and to accurately comment on contemporary cabinet issues. Due to strict party discipline at the executive ranks voting records are useless. Outside of release due to litigation or judicial enquiries, cabinet documents do not meet public eyes for years. Meanwhile, former cabinet ministers willing to cooperate with interviews can only provide subjectively constructed memories. Major cabinet works by W.A. Matheson, Herman Bakvis and Donald Savoie are mostly supported by anecdotal evidence rather than statistical data.

Regardless of the challenges, academics have produced a wealth of articles and books on the subject of cabinet in Canada. Cabinet studies in Canada can be grouped into three main areas with a handful of articles not confining to these classifications. The majority of studies have concentrated on the institution itself, the representative role and or the reform and critique of cabinet. Institutional based pieces focus on the rules and traditions of cabinet, mostly based on a comparative view with Britain. Matheson's *The Prime Minister and the Cabinet* offers an appropriate illustration of the roots school with his deliberate explanation of the rules, roles and responsibilities of cabinet. The representative view contemplates the role of cabinet as a representative body, the best example being Bakvis' crucial *Regional Ministers*. Finally, those looking at reform offer critiques of the cabinet asking questions about openness, democracy and effectiveness. Savoie's *Governing from the Centre* can be viewed as a sceptical analysis of Canada's federal executive.

While other works fall into more diverse and minor categories, one aspect of cabinet has gone relatively untouched in Canada. The introduction of prime minister Paul Martin's first

cabinet was highlighted by the fact that three frontbenchers had experience in other political parties. With such high profile partisan range in cabinet we are reminded of the little to no attention that academics have placed on political ideology differences within the cabinet. Interestingly, journalists have not shared this wariness of the topic; often speculating any ideological splits or disputes within the executive. While providing a brief and concise literature review of the three classifications of cabinet study, this short paper asks the question: why have journalists asked questions about ideology while academics have not? I will argue that ideology has not been discussed much in academic works due to the difficulty of presenting a well-supported and sound argument. Even more than other studies of cabinet, an ideological focus would present tremendous reliance on anecdotal and subjective information. The media has much more flexibility in producing a subjective and speculative line of reasoning.

For consistency sake, the *Globe and Mail* will be the only paper used as an example of political ideological speculation in the media. The *Globe* is appropriate because it is a national newspaper and should not contain the possible regional bias of such papers as the *Montreal Gazette* or the *Toronto Star*. Also, the *Globe* should be historically considered Canada's only major national newspaper since the *National Post* has only been published since its first edition ran on October 27, 1998. Other Canadian political ideology academic studies will be mentioned to provide an example of a place within Canadian political science where speculation on cabinet ministers' ideology could be considered and to support the notion that the political environment of Canada may not produce the need for questions on ideology to be asked.

Institutional Approach

Two of the earliest articles written on cabinet were Norman Rogers' pair of pieces appearing in the February and April 1933 editions of *The Canadian Bar Review*. Rogers' first article looked to the past while his second contemplated the future. Rogers argues that "there can be no doubt that the primary intention of the Quebec and London Conferences was to reproduce within the framework of federal institutions in Canada, the cabinet system of Great Britain."[1] This early observation has been echoed by many cabinet scholars since and demonstrated the great weight of influence that Britain had on Canadian political institutions. Rogers also makes comments on the developing representative nature of the cabinet, "in the selection of the first Dominion Cabinet there was a distinct recognition of three forms of representation, the representation of provinces, of the French-Canadian population of Quebec, and of two religious minorities."[2] No representation of ideology was mentioned, only regional, linguistic and religious concerns being addressed. The three R's – race, religion and region – would be a constant theme in cabinet literature for years to come.

Rogers' second article follows his argument of the importance of cabinet as a representative body. While he considers the reform ideas of certain observers, Rogers still stresses his original point. Rogers comments that "certainly the conventions respecting representation are too firmly established to permit of interference with impunity except by means of a concordat agreed to by all interested groups now having recognized claims to cabinet representation."[3] These thoughts would reappear in the actions and writings of many future cabinet makers and scholars.

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[1] Norman Rogers. "Federal Influences on the Canadian Cabinet" *The Canadian Bar Review*. February 1933. Pg. 1
[2] Rogers. "Federal Influences on the Canadian Cabinet", Pg. 5
[3] Norman Rogers. "Evolution and Reform of the Canadian Cabinet" *The Canadian Bar Review*. April 1933. Pg. 17-18

In 1946, R. MacGregor Dawson gave the Canadian Political Science Association address on the topic of cabinet. Dawson found a dual nature in executive power, the Crown ratifying the decisions, but the cabinet greatly influencing these decisions. The inheritance of the cabinet tradition from Britain is seen as a peculiarity. Dawson contends that "Cabinet government was the product of a series of historical accidents, experiments, and temporary expedients, and was so haphazard in its origin and development that no one could have planned it in advance."[4] Dawson focuses on the personnel within cabinet and considers executive membership. This examination draws on some cases that present ideological diversity within the executive. The example of the Union Government demonstrates an occasion when different partisan backgrounds came together in cabinet. The Unionists were born out incredibly extreme circumstances, the First World War, and did not exist much longer than their usefulness. Dawson raises the issue of representation noting that "the most notable characteristic of the Canadian Cabinet is the representative nature of its membership" but does not mention ideology listing "provincial, sectional, religious, racial and other interests" as the main categories of representation.[5]

Published in the same issue as Dawson's article was former clerk of the Privy Council, A.D.P. Heeney's "Cabinet Government in Canada: Some Recent Developments in the Machinery of the Central Executive". Over fifty years before Savoie's thesis on the concentration of power Heeney argued "at the outset, attention should be drawn to the paramount position of the Prime Minister in relation to the machinery of executive government […] the Prime Minister must be the master of the Cabinet in matters of organization and procedure."[6] In

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[4] R. MacGregor Dawson. "The Cabinet-Position and Personnel" *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science.* Volume 12. Number 3. August 1946. Pg. 261
[5] Dawson, "The Cabinet-Position and Personnel", Pg. 270
[6] A.D.P. Heeney. "Cabinet Government in Canada: Some Recent Developments in the Machinery of the Central Executive" *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science.* Volume 12. Number 3. August 1946. Pg. 282

contrast to Dawson, Heeney simply offers a manual to cabinet, a nuts and bolts explanation of the executive. While it does not necessarily contain a compelling argument, it is important due to its prevalence as one of the first articles solely focused on cabinet written by a government insider.

In 1959, W.E.D. Halliday continued the tradition of Heeney by producing a mostly descriptive account of the Canadian federal cabinet for *Canadian Public Administration*. Halliday generally focuses on the procedures and the duties of the cabinet, practically ignoring its role as representative body for even regional interests. Halliday states that cabinet "is a policy making-body, initiating legislation and executive action and even entering the judicial field in a sense that it is the source of judicial appointments."[7] Considering recent observations on judicial appointments coming directly from the prime minister, Halliday's comment is quite intriguing as contemporary cabinet is rarely designated as a forum for appointment debate. Obviously with little mention of representative responsibilities, speculation of ideology in cabinet is nowhere to be found in Halliday's piece.

Another attempt to "tell the story" of cabinet took place in 1965 with Mary Banks' "Privy Council, Cabinet, and Ministry in Britain and Canada: A Story of Confusion". The article may be redundant for those extremely familiar with cabinet, but for any student attempting to grasp the differences between the Privy Council, the cabinet and the ministry it could be helpful.[8] Banks demonstrates how Canada inherited, like the majority of its political practices, the traditions of the British cabinet system. Along with the cabinet system came the somewhat perplexing titles. It

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[7] W.E.D. Halliday. "The Executive of the Government of Canada" *Canadian Public Administration*. Volume 2. 1959. Pg. 231

[8] Another article focusing on Privy Council is Eugene Forsey's 1966 examination of "Meetings of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, 1867-1882" in *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*. Volume 32. Number 4. Forsey notes that "the first thing that can be said with some assurance is that the whole Privy Council for Canada seems never to have met, even during the few months, before Galt's resignation on November 7, 1967, when the membership of the Cabinet and the Privy Council was identical."

took Canada a number of decades to separate the three and accurately follow the British model.

As Banks explains though, Canada did sway somewhat from the original intent:

> In Canada where geographical distribution plays such an important part in cabinet formation, it would be impracticable to have so small a cabinet (as Britain did with eight or nine ministers during WWII) and the tendency to keep cabinet and ministry synonymous has had the effect of making the Canadian cabinet somewhat larger than its British counterpart.[9]

Despite the fact that Banks does not offer spectacular insights into cabinet representation, she does a commendable job of explaining a confusing Canadian political structure.

The first book solely dedicated to the study of cabinet was W.A. Matheson's *The Prime Minister and the Cabinet*. The work does not have a unifying thesis but definitely contains a unifying purpose and that is to explain the roles of cabinet in Canadian government. Matheson strongly supports the concept of the representational principle in cabinet, but this does not include other partisan or ideological interests and only focuses on region and race. A few ideological distinctions are revealed. Arthur Meighen's appointment of a former Liberal, C.C. Ballantyne, as his Quebec lieutenant is mentioned, but only briefly.[10] Matheson also cites, without much speculation, Lester Pearson's "economic interest" appointments of a "right-wing business tycoon", Robert Winters, and a "left-wing union leader", Jean Marchand.[11] In a quick study of the Matheson's book, there is a hint of ideological factors working within cabinet but it is not extensively articulated.

Another important book for the study of the cabinet government in Canada is the collection *Apex of Power: The Prime Minister and Political Leadership in Canada*. There are a few important chapters from this work worth consideration. One in particular is Fred Schindler's

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[9] Margaret Banks. "Privy Council, Cabinet, and Ministry in Britain and Canada: A Story of Confusion" *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science.* Volume 31. Number 2. May 1965. Pg. 205
[10] W.A. Matheson. *The Prime Minister and the Cabinet.* Toronto: Methuen, 1976. Pg. 35
[11] Matheson, Pg. 45

article on the cabinet's history and development. Schindler presents the cabinet in the evolutionary and developmental sense with its roots found in the British system. The explanation includes the change from "executive council" to "cabinet" and the differentiation between "privy council" and "cabinet". The discussion goes from the meaning of cabinet government to representation in cabinet to decision making cabinet. This study is most interested in the section on representation but does Schindler ask questions of ideology in relation to cabinet ministers? No. Schindler sticks with the usual suspects of cabinet representation; religion, race (language) and region. The tradition of representation goes back to Confederation as Schindler explains that "from the beginning, certain portfolios were deemed to be more relevant to some regions and interests than to others […] thus precedents were established and expectations were built up which a prime minister could ignore only at his peril."[12] Schindler confirms the importance of representation, but a limited sort of representation enjoyed by more tangible groups other than ideology.

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[12] Fred Schindler. "The Prime Minister and the Cabinet: History and Development" *Apex of Power: The Prime Minister and Political Leadership in Canada. 2nd Edition.* Ed. Thomas A. Hockin. Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1977. Pg. 34

Representational Approach

Where electoral studies have seen scholars focus on specific federal elections, few studies have specified examination of particular cabinets. There have been some exceptions. Robert Borden's first cabinet was the focus of a 1957 article by Heath Macquarrie. Macquarrie wrote with a perceptive awareness of the representative duties of federal cabinet:

> in the cabinet making process much more is involved than an awareness of constitutional conventions and an appreciation of the political realities of the moment […] the selection of the personnel of his government is a most difficult task for a prime minister and one which involves a host of considerations, administrative, political and personal[13]

To assess these concerns, Macquarrie chose the 1911 Borden cabinet. It is noted that Borden attempted to appease the Nationalists of Quebec and the anti-reciprocity Liberals but found much difficulty.[14] The article is filled with interesting political anecdotes surrounding the construction of the cabinet while Macquarrie makes some significant remarks considering the care with which cabinets are composed. Macquarrie writes that "while the construction of a cabinet may require that past disloyalty be forgiven in the interest of party solidarity, it also affords an opportunity of rewarding fidelity and reliability."[15] In terms of ideology and partisan representation, Macquarrie does account for some cross party recruitment by Borden. Much of the partisan shuffling took place due to the fight over reciprocity. An individual considered by many to be a Liberal, Thomas White, was appointed minister of finance. Macquarrie comments that "Borden did not need to be persuaded either of White's merits or of the desirability of having an anti-reciprocity Liberal […] he had a healthy regard for the maxim 'divide and conquer'."[16] Would this method of divide and conquer find its way into the cabinet making of any other Canadian prime

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[13] Heath N. Macquarrie. "The Formation of Borden's First Cabinet" *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*. Volume 23. Number 1. February 1957. Pg. 90
[14] Macquarrie, "The Formation of Borden's First Cabinet", Pg. 91
[15] Macquarrie, "The Formation of Borden's First Cabinet", Pg. 93
[16] Macquarrie, "The Formation of Borden's First Cabinet", Pg. 95

minister? Possibly, but the academic community has not spent much effort on attempting to answer the question.

Some scholars after Macquarrie have also been concerned with the composition of cabinet. A chapter from Dennis Olsen's *State Elite* asks some very important questions concerning the membership of the executive. Olsen discovers the typical trends of cabinet ministers as mostly being male lawyers, but also asks some interesting questions concerning class. The upper class elite in Canada are described as a small group, on the fringes of Canadian society. Olsen contends that "it is the middle class that provides most of the key personnel of politics in Canada because it is this class, rather than the upper class, that must struggle and engage in politics in order to secure favourable policies."[17] Empirical evidence is provided for occupation and political experience but not for class composition. Even without the numbers to support the class argument, the premise is still useful. But the upper elite have still found its way into cabinet and Olsen does not ignore this naming a few to prove his point: "James Richardson, Pierre Trudeau, Charles Drury, Walter Gordon and Gordon Hees".[18] Ideology is not mentioned but discussion of class is at least drifting towards an ideological approach. Another scholar interested in elite perspectives, Robert Presthus, offers a few brief comments on cabinet and accommodation, arguing that there is a convergence of goals and beliefs for those in power. Presthus contends that:

> Theoretically, the Cabinet is supposed to provide the ultimate synthesizing force, but such hardly seems the case [...] the tendency of governmental elites to reinforce the going distributive system also reflects, as we have shown, the socioeconomic, interactional and ideological continuities existing between them and politically-active interest group leaders.[19]

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[17] Dennis Olsen. "The Political Elite" *Party Politics in Canada. 5th Edition.* Ed. Hugh G. Thorburn. Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1985. Pg. 67
[18] Olsen, Pg. 66
[19] Robert Presthus. "The Consequences of Elite Accommodation between the Cabinet, Bureaucracy and Interest Groups" *Party Politics in Canada. 5th Edition.* Ed. Hugh G. Thorburn. Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1985. Pg. 60-61

Presthus and Olsen press the case for cabinet as a class-based group and this may lead to helping us understand the lack of focus on ideology. The reality could be that class simply trumps political ideology. Do cabinet members see themselves as the elite and look past any ideological differences? Again, weak access to information and subjective data are hurdles to answering this question.

In a 1985 article, Colin Campbell combined both the representative approach and reform approach in assessing the cabinet committee system through the representational lens. In a comparative collection of cabinet pieces, Campbell argues that "the representational imperative places unrelenting upward pressures on the size of cabinets […] Canada has developed its highly complex system of cabinet committees in an effort to overcome the diseconomies resulting from overly large cabinets."[20] Similar to other authors, Campbell demonstrates how cabinet organization rationalized in the late 1970s and the early 1980s only to have the changes undone by Brian Mulroney once he became prime minister. This article is yet another example of the leader centred focus on cabinet and the exuberance academics displayed in explaining the transition from Trudeau to Mulroney and its impact on cabinet organization.

With much of the focus during the 1980s on organization within cabinet, Herman Bakvis contributed possibly the strongest work on representation and the composition of federal cabinet with his 1991 book, *Regional Ministers*. Bakvis' ideas had made an appearance three years earlier in an article titled "Regional Ministers, National Policies and the Administrative State in Canada". In the article, Bakvis acknowledges the decline of the regional minister system but

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[20] Colin Campbell. "Cabinet committees in Canada: pressures and dysfunctions stemming from the representational imperative" *Unlocking the Cabinet: Cabinet Structures in Comparative Perspective.* Ed. Thomas T. Mackie, Brian W. Hogwood. London: SAGE Publications, 1985. Pg. 62

argues that it was revived by the Trudeau government from 1980 to 1984.[21] The book supports

and adds a great deal to the original article. Bakvis provides extensive background on the

composition of cabinet and the development of the "regional minister" and within this analysis

provides some examples of an ideological element. For example, Bakvis cites instances of

Robert Borden recruiting Nationalistes and King attempting to recruit Progressives.[22] Though

not providing extensive attention to ideological divide in cabinet, Bakvis' observations are

noteworthy.

Graham White is one of a handful of cabinet scholars to attempt to engage in the

personalities found in Canadian cabinets. In a 1994 article White examined the interpersonal

dynamics in provincial cabinets. This study should be replicated for the federal cabinet and

hopefully a similar approach will be found in White's upcoming contribution to the Democratic

Audit series. Regardless, White's contribution is an interesting addition to the cabinet literature.

The key observation made is that there is a "surprisingly low level of conflict in Canadian

provincial cabinets."[23] While White discusses the personalities and abilities of ministers, he does

not mention ideology. He considers "strong" and "weak" ministers but does not pursue the

possibility of ideological differences. Inter and intra cabinet conflicts are examined in the short

article so it may simply be of a case that the analysis was not expansive enough to consider

another factor, and a complex factor at that.

Common to the field of cabinet studies in Canada are examinations of provincial cabinets

which serve as laboratories for the federal experience. Another government insider who had

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[21] Herman Bakvis. "Regional Ministers, National Policies and the Administrative State in Canada: The Regional Dimension in Cabinet Decision-Making, 1980-1984" *Canadian Journal of Political Science.* Volume XXI. Number 3. Pg. 541

[22] Herman Bakvis. *Regional Ministers: Power and Influence in the Canadian Cabinet.* Toronto: University of Toronto, 1991.

[23] Graham White. "The interpersonal dynamics of decision making in Canadian provincial cabinets" *Cabinet Ministers and Parliamentary Government.* Ed. Michael Laver, Kenneth A. Shepsle. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. Pg. 254

worked in the Cabinet office, Ted Glenn provided an analysis of leader-centred cabinet in

Ontario during the Harris government from 1995 to 1999. Considering the many changes

introduced by Harris, Glenn asks why cabinet decision-making systems are designed the way

they are. Similar to developments at the federal level, Premier Harris attempted to depart from a

reliance on an elaborate, institutionalized system of decision-making. Glenn demonstrates how

Harris then "reinstitutionalized" the cabinet to a system that centralized structure favouring the

premier's personal approach to decision-making. Glenn writes that "the premier likes to 'sign–

off' on all proposals coming forward to full cabinet – from strategic policy approvals, to

financial and legislative details, to communications strategies – and his role as chair of the

Priorities and Planning committee ensures that he can do so."[24] This article was yet another

demonstration of the challenge the literature presents to such traditional beliefs as the first

minister being "first among equals". Considering the actions of first ministers at both the

provincial and federal level throughout Canada's history, is there any need for a reference to

"equals"?

One of the most cited articles for those interested in cabinet design and structure

concerning committees and decision-making organization is Ian Clark's "Recent changes in the

cabinet decision-making system in Ottawa". Clark, who had his article published in 1985, was a

deputy secretary to the cabinet under Mulroney. Again, this an article centred on the reforms

influenced by the prime minister. Clark highlights the major differences between Trudeau and

Mulroney's executive including larger cabinet membership, fewer cabinet committees and

simplified procedures.[25] The article includes a much needed update on the historical evolution of

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[24] Ted Glenn. "Politics, leadership, and experience in designing Ontario's cabinet" *Canadian Public Administration.* Volume 44. Number 2. Summer 2001. Pg. 195

[25] Ian D. Clark. "Recent changes in the cabinet decision-making system in Ottawa" *Canadian Public Administration.* Volume 28. Number 2. Summer 1985. Pg. 185

cabinet and a thorough explanation of Mulroney's cabinet organization. Considering he was part of the process being described, Clark was able to avoid any back-slapping simply stating that "the basic purpose of the new set of arrangements is, however, the same as any cabinet system – to reach timely decisions in a way that will satisfy the government's priorities and needs while maintaining the collective responsibility of the cabinet ministers."[26] In all, the article is another top-down analysis of cabinet, the body's membership and any consideration of personalities is ignored.

Building on the work of Ian Clark, Peter Aucoin presented his own view of the change in management paradigm shift from Trudeau to Mulroney. The focus of the 1986 article was on executive leadership philosophy and how it influenced the committee structure and political management of the federal cabinet. Aucoin was attempting to apply a broad approach to a specific case of two political actors. The article does not consider representation or ideology but it does stress the importance of the leader's role which is directly tied to the decision making process that leads to cabinet composition. Continuing the practice of arguing in support of the predominance of the prime minister, Aucoin comments that "prime ministers – their philosophies of governance, their management styles and their political objectives – are the chief determinants in the organizational design of the central machinery of government."[27] Even though Aucoin does not explicitly criticize the role of the prime minister, it is apparent that he identifies the position as the target for any blame or credit in cabinet affairs.

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[26] Clark, Pg. 201
[27] Peter Aucoin. "Organizational Change in the Machinery of Canadian Government: From Rational Management to Brokerage Parties" *Canadian Journal of Political Science.* Volume XIX. Number 1. March 1986. Pg. 26

<u>Reform/Critical Approach</u>

As is becoming apparent from this review, the arrival of Brian Mulroney to 24 Sussex

Drive provided students of cabinet with a wealth of new developments to contemplate. Many

important pieces were published in the wake of Mulroney's successful federal election, but none

have been more influential on the past two decades of cabinet scholarship as J. Stefan Dupré's

"Reflections on the Workability of Executive Federalism". In this article Dupré introduced three

stages of cabinet operation: traditional, departmentalized and institutionalized. The traditional

mode is reminiscent of Jean Hamelin's prescribed "chamber of political compensation" model.

The departmentalized cabinet reflected the growth of the "modern administrative state" and the

institutionalized mode represented a combination of formal structures, central agencies, collegial

decision making and government-wide decision-making.[28] Dupré contends that the

institutionalized system began in the Prairies and eventually found itself in the federal

government:

> The original Canadian home of the institutionalized cabinet is the Saskatchewan of
> Premier T.C. Douglas, and its best documented manifestations are those of the
> Pearson-Trudeau-Clark-Trudeau era in Ottawa. With substantial variations, both
> spatially and temporally, the institutionalized cabinet has as its theme the quest to
> make contemporary government decision making manageable.[29]

The legacy Dupré left is still found in recent public administration textbooks such as David

Johnson's *Thinking Government: Public Sector Management in Canada* which cites him

extensively. The legacy is Dupré's excellent organizational observation. No era-based analysis of

cabinet composition has stood up as well to the test of time.

Over a decade later Christopher Dunn, with the help of Donald Savoie's observations,

added to Dupré's analysis with the "prime minister-centred cabinet". The new mode contained

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[28] J. Stefan Dupré. "Reflections on the Workability of Executive Federalism" *The Canadian Political Tradition: Basic Readings*. 2nd Edition. Ed. R.S. Blair, J.T. McLeod. Toronto: NelsonCanada, 1993. Pg. 474-475
[29] Ibid.,

such elements as "centralized decision-making, centralized budgeting, extensive central agency analysis, a dominant first minister and a streamlined cabinet."[30] Dunn appears to borrow from all directions without offering any new or original explanations of cabinet government. Instead he tests and applies old models to case situations, mainly provincial cabinet which he dedicated an entire book to. For an exhaustive examination of the "prime minister-centred cabinet" it is better to focus on the work of Donald Savoie.

In 1999 Savoie showed off the incredible degree of access he had received to the highest levels of government by publishing an article, "The Rise of Court Government in Canada" and a book, *Governing from the Centre*, which built a case for the centralization of power in Canada that was supported by anecdotes which at one time only a fly on the wall could have compiled. Both works focus on the same premise: "in the late 1990s, political power is in the hands of the prime minister and a small group of carefully selected courtiers rather than with the prime minister acting in concert with his elected colleagues."[31] Supporting and adding to the trend of both academic and popular political literature, Savoie's book was successful in delivering its message to students, politicians and citizens alike. It is also the type of work that definitely does not fit in a literature review searching for a discussion of ideology in cabinet because according to Savoie it simply does not matter. As he contends in his lengthy and somewhat redundant book "cabinet has now joined parliament as an institution being bypassed [...] real political debate and decision making are increasingly elsewhere [...] in the Prime Minister's Office, in the Privy Council Office and in the Department of Finance."[32]

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[30] Christopher Dunn. "The Central Executive in Canadian Government: Searching for the Holy Grail" *The Handbook of Canadian Public Administration.* Ed. Christopher Dunn. Don Mills: Oxford, 2002. Pg. 314
[31] Donald Savoie. "The Rise of Court Government in Canada" *Canadian Journal of Political Science.* Volume XXXII. Number 4. December 1999. Pg. 637.
[32] Donald Savoie. *Governing from the Centre: The Concentration of Power in Canadian Politics.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999. Pg. 362

A cabinet convention and tradition that is commonly raised as a topic of reform is ministerial responsibility. S.L. Sutherland defended the traditional view of ministerial responsibility in a 1991 journal article. Sutherland is critical of the new management initiatives of the early 1990s: "new accountability initiatives have addressed problems we do not have, failed to address other problems that we probably do have, and have created a challenge for responsible government."[33] Sutherland believes that further change may reduce accessibility to ministers and while this line of argument does not consider representation of ideology it does stress the importance of what cabinet does rather than who is in cabinet.

Echoing the academic musings of Donald Savoie and the more mainstream writings of Jeffrey Simpson, Herman Bakvis asked in 2000, "prime minister and cabinet in Canada: an autocracy in need of reform?" Bakvis suggests five possible reforms that would not necessarily produce more influence for individual members of parliament but rather reinforce the position of cabinet. The five reforms Bakvis suggested were: "proportional representation for the House of Commons, an elected senate, strengthened parliamentary caucuses, a fixed time-table for elections and the New Zealand approach to the appointment of senior officials."[34] In his view, Bakvis highlights the need for an elected senate but sees more utility in certain moderate reforms such as arm's length appointments and fixed election dates.[35] By the end of the article the viewpoint of Savoie is more or less supported and other than the unique application of non-cabinet reforms to cabinet reform, Bakvis does not shed entirely new light on the subject.

Peter Aucoin adopted S.L. Sutherland's idea of "democratic control" over public administration to write about ministerial responsibility in 2003. Aucoin questions the democracy

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[33] S.L. Sutherland. "Responsible Government and Ministerial Responsibility: Every Reform Is Its Own Problem" *Canadian Journal of Political Science*. Volume XXIV. Number 1. March 1991. Pg. 120
[34] Herman Bakvis. "Prime Minister and Cabinet in Canada: An Autocracy in Need of Reform?" *Journal of Canadian Studies*. Volume 35. Number 4. Winter 2001. Pg. 60
[35] Bakvis, "Prime Minister and Cabinet in Canada: An Autocracy in Need of Reform?", Pg. 76-77

of independent foundations and whether or not they undermine system of ministerial

responsibility. By outlining "at arm's length" government organizations which are beyond the

ministerial departments, Aucoin not only questions the legitimacy of the government practice but

also the role and responsibilities of ministers of the Crown. The author demonstrates how a

minister's position is not only threatened by personal mistakes but also institutional

vulnerabilities. Aucoin asserts that "what exists at present, accordingly, is a major disconnection,

not between the theory and the practice of ministerial responsibility, but between the rhetoric of

public reporting and the reality of private governance."[36] The article demonstrates that individual

actors can be placed in institutional arrangements which challenge their legitimacy and

performance due to insufficient structures.

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[36] Peter Aucoin. "Independent foundations, public money and public accountability: Whither ministerial as democratic governance?" *Canadian Public Administration.* Volume 46. Number 1. Spring 2003. Pg. 23

Is there any room for ideology?

Since it is apparent that cabinet literature does not adequately address ideology, possibly the discussion on executive ideology is taking place in another part of the Canadian political science discipline. Perhaps, ideology in cabinet is being considered in the political parties and ideology field of Canadian political science. Highlighted by the works of Campbell, Christian, Thorburn, Whitehorn and Cross there is a rich tradition of study in this area. Have any of these scholars or others in the field considered cabinet while analyzing party and ideology? The following section will attempt to answer this question with a brief look at some of the offerings found in the Canadian political ideology/party literature.

In their seminal work *Political Parties and Ideologies in Canada*, Christian and Campbell, mention the mingling of parties and recruitment attempts by leaders but not to the extent of considering cabinet or upper levels of the party. For example, the authors comment that "he (Borden) welcomed the influx of pro-conscriptionist Liberals into his government" but do not go any further in discussing the Union government.[37] What could be cited as a reason why there is so little movement between parties is suggested by Christian and Campbell early in the work, "ideological changes are rare events […] to reject one ideology without adhering to another is a serious matter."[38] Along with Christian and Campbell, many scholars have considered the question of party and ideology in the Canadian political science. The more literature reviewed, the less evident any ties between cabinet and ideology emerge. Three factors are proposed to help explain the insignificance of studying ideology in cabinet.

The first factor is party name or label. As recent history has proven, Canadian politicians have the luxury of having their party identity redefined in a partisan branding exercise. This

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[37] William Christian and Colin Campbell. *Political Parties and Ideologies in Canada. 3rd Edition.* Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1990. Pg. 115
[38] Christian et al., Pg. 15

tradition could make the significance of a party label seem very small. J.A. Laponce recalled the growing practice:

> This attempt at fooling or reversing history by changing one's name explains that the Conservatives in Quebec became Nationalists in 1911, and that federally they became Unionists in 1917, Liberal-Conservatives in 1921, National Government in 1940 and Progressive-Conservatives in 1945.[39]

With this type of practice, it may not be as remarkable if a Conservative sits in a Liberal cabinet or vice versa. In fact for many politicians, party labels may be just that; a label and nothing more. Canadians' political aptitude has been questioned of late and many find that it is weak or non-existent. Lambert et al. concluded from their empirical study that only a minority of the test sample was able to define left and right political beliefs.[40]

The second factor is the peculiar nature of ideology in Canadian politics. One of the dominant approaches to studying Canadian party politics is the brokerage theory. Brokerage parties have long been considered to sidestep essentially ideological platforms, hoping instead to foster accommodation and national unity. In comparison to the United States, both English and French Canada have been seen as less ideologically structured.[41] Through the brokerage lens, Conservatives and Liberals are seen as being very similar with few strong ideological variations. In the role of parties of accommodation both Liberals and Conservatives have attempted to lessen the differences between Canadians and stress their similarities. This environment may have altered due to a change in the party system after the 1993 election as William Cross and Lisa Young contend that empirical evidence suggests that partisan differences are sharpening, a

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[39] J.A. Laponce. "Canadian Party Labels: An Essay in Semantics and Anthropology" *Canadian Journal of Political Science.* Volume II. Number 2. June 1969. Pg. 147

[40] Ronald D. Lambert, James E. Curtis, Steven D. Brown and Barry J. Kay. "In Search of Left/Right Beliefs in the Canadian Electorate" *Canadian Journal of Political Science.* Volume XIX. Number 3. September 1986. Pg. 559

[41] Roger Gibbins and Neil Nevitte. "Canadian Political Ideology: A Comparative Analysis" *Canadian Journal of Political Science.* Volume XVIII. Number 3. September 1985. Pg. 398

notion that may make ideological concerns more significant for the study of parliament and cabinet.[42]

The third factor is the weak identification and loyalty Canadian voters have demonstrated towards political parties. Scholars have made their best attempts to create a successful model of ideological identification in Canadian politics. John Zipp points out that "the view that both parties and individuals can be located on a left-right scale […] attempts to apply this framework to Canada have not met with unqualified success."[43] In recent years, certain authors have pointed out a stronger move towards certain political ideologies, but not with a specific partisan attachment. Identified as the "new politics" Nevitte et al. explain that "findings indicate the presence of postmaterialist orientations among the young and a structuring capacity of postmaterialism versus left/right with respect to attitudes in different policy domains."[44] These results signify another stress on the potency of party identification as a definitive aspect of a Canadian citizen's political involvement. Others have written on the weak party identification found in Canada. In a 1987 study, Michael Stevenson concluded that "voting is more affected by short-term interest in issues manipulated by parties rather than by enduring ideological orientations rooted in class or other group identities."[45] Stevenson and Nevitte's studies reject past findings. In 1974, Sniderman et al. concluded that "most Canadians think of themselves as supporters of a particular party […] this sense of identification with a party tends to reflect a long

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[42] William Cross and Lisa Young. "Policy Attitudes of Party Members of Canada: Evidence of Ideological Politics" *Canadian Journal of Political Science.* Volume 35. Number 4. December 2002. Pg. 879

[43] John F. Zipp. "Left-Right Dimensions of Canadian Federal Party Identification: A Discriminant Analysis" *Canadian Journal of Political Science.* Volume XI. Number 2. June 1978. Pg. 251

[44] Neil Nevette, Herman Bakvis and Roger Gibbins. "The Ideological Contours of 'New Politics' in Canada: Policy, Mobilization and Partisan Support" *Canadian Journal of Political Science.* Volume XXII. Number 3. September 1989. Pg. 477

[45] H. Michael Stevenson. "Ideology and Unstable Party Identification in Canada: Limited Rationality in a Brokerage Party System" *Canadian Journal of Political Science.* Volume XX. Number 4. December 1987. Pg. 813

term commitment and not a passing preference."[46] With a decrease in party identification in the Canadian populous, the partisan and ideological politics in the executive become less of a concern as a significant factor. While the three factors outlined for explaining the absence of ideological observations in cabinet do not completely explain the negligence, they do shed some light on the situation.

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[46] Paul M. Sniderman, H.D. Forbes, Ian Melzer. "Party Loyalty and Electoral Volatility: A Study of the Canadian Party System" *Canadian Journal of Political Science.* Volume VII. Number 2. June 1974. Pg. 286

<u>The speculative press</u>

The press has certainly taken a different view on cabinet ministers. *The Globe and Mail* has developed a tradition of personal and penetrating analysis of cabinet appointments and shuffles. With little reliance on empirical data, journalists and editorial boards have been able to speculate in much greater ways than have the scholarly observers. Here are a few examples of the remarks made on cabinet throughout the years.

In describing some of Mackenzie King's appointments to his 1935, *The Globe* declared "we do not know them all personally, but Elliott, Euler, and Mackenzie constitute an additional trio whom anyone would like to meet were they cabinet ministers or corner grocers."[47] While probably not identifying any corner grocers, the media is quick to point out the interests of a minister. Appointments to appease the right-wing business interests have normally been flagged by the *Globe*. Diefenbaker's selection of Wallace McCutcheon was heralded as "being designed not only to restore the confidence of businessmen in the ability of the government to provide sound leadership but also that of the ordinary voter."[48] Trudeau's 1972 post-election cabinet featured such selections as Alastair Gillespie described as "one of the few prominent businessmen in the last Trudeau cabinet."[49] The media many times can display their deft with an understanding of a minister's strong position on a certain policy. After Mulroney's introduction of his first post-1988 election cabinet, it was noted that "a similar shift of note is that of Pierre Beatty from minister of defence to health and welfare, which may be Ottawa's face-saving way of beating swords into plowshares […] Beatty was the outspoken champion of the proposal to equip the Canadian navy with nuclear-powered submarines."[50]

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[47] Editorial. "The New Cabinet" *The Globe and Mail.* October 26, 1935. A3
[48] Bruce Macdonald. "The Two Key Moves in the Cabinet Shuffle" *The Globe and Mail.* August 13, 1962. A7
[49] John Rolfe. "Gillespie appointed to Pepin's old post" *The Globe and Mail.* November 28, 1972. A6
[50] Editorial. "His New Cabinet" *The Globe and Mail.* January 31, 1989. A6

With the 1993 Chretién key appointments of Paul Martin, Marcel Masse and Roy MacLaren, *The Globe and Mail* editorial described the cabinet as right leaning: "in their (Herb Gray, André Ouellet) place are Liberals of the Mitchell Sharp hue: Blue Grits."[51] Certain portfolios have been targeted for experiencing ideological shifts. In 1996, Chretién's choice for Foreign Affairs, Lloyd Axworthy was described as being "associated with the party's centre-left".[52]

It is interesting to note that *The Globe and Mail* has been weary and critical of prime ministers' adherence to the traditional rules of representation. In response to Pearson's first cabinet in 1963 the paper wrote that:

> If there is a more general fault to be found with Mr. Pearson's selection of his cabinet it is that he appears to have allowed himself to be unduly influenced by the tradition of distributing appointments on the basis of the three Rs – race, religion and region. So far as his frontbenchers are concerned, he seems to have selected men of strength and ability. But in making some other appointments these essential qualities appear to have taken second place to the demands of a practice which, in our view, is outmoded.[53]

This has been just a brief sample of *The Globe and Mail*'s speculation, but does suggest the need for greater scrutiny of the relationship between the press and the analysis of cabinet.

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[51] Editorial. "Blue Grits against the rest" *The Globe and Mail.* November 5, 1993. A26
[52] Jeff Sallot. "Foreign Affairs gets new shift to centre-left" *The Globe and Mail.* January 26, 1996. A4
[53] Editorial. "The New Cabinet" *The Globe and Mail.* April 23, 1963. A6

Conclusion

This overview may have seemed at times haphazard, disconnected and chaotic, but that would appear to be a proper way to describe the development of the area of study focusing on cabinet in Canadian government. Are the scholars asking the correct questions? Or are they only asking the questions which can be answered? The very nature of cabinet makes it an extremely difficult political institution to examine, even without considering the traditional and conventional barriers such as the high level of confidentiality that goes along with the practice of cabinet secrecy.

A more extensive study of the question of ideology in cabinet could include a sample of comparative literature demonstrating how other nations have treated the phenomenon. This has been an internal focus on the canon and the only comparative aspect is that between the cabinet literature and the political ideology literature including the media's contribution. Outside of Canada, many scholars have focused on alliances and coalitions, mostly in states with different electoral systems. There has been some work done on coalitions and alliances in Canadian federal parliament. Ian Stewart wrote a piece focusing on the Liberal minority situation in 1972 and the history of coalition behaviour in parliament. He uncovered some intriguing trends such as "Canadian federal parties have not used coalition governments to resolve minority stalemates" and "minor parties have always provided the initial voting support to sustain a government; the two major parties have never sustained each other in office."[54]

It must be noted that for the consideration of ideology in cabinet, there is a precise difference between personal political ideologies and personal partisan politics. There can be a distinction in ideology while agreeing on partisan affiliation while at the same time there can be

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[54] Ian Stewart. "Of Customs and Coalitions: The Formation of Canadian Federal Parliamentary Alliances" *Canadian Journal of Political Science.* Volume XIII. Number 3. September 1980. Pg. 453-455

a partisan division while favouring a similar ideological position. A concrete example could be as follows: (ideological differences) a right-wing business supporter and a left-wing union sympathizer in cabinet opposed to (partisan differences) a former Conservative and a former New Democratic in cabinet. There is quite a bit of difference between these two scenarios but it still must be contended that neither enjoy much consideration in the cabinet literature.

In conclusion, the field for ideological study in cabinet is still wide open. Academics should draw more upon the newspapers sources and take risks in terms of experimenting with the collection of data. With the high politics and fragile personalities involved in cabinet, there must be conflicts which can be examined beyond the scope of political biographies. 2005 will see the publication of two new full-length books on cabinet; Graham White's *Cabinet and First Ministers* and Luc Bernier, Keith Brownsey and Michael Howlett's *Executive Styles in Cabinet: Leadership Practices in Canadian Government*. Hopefully these two works will take the analysis beyond institutional organization or pragmatic suggestions for reform and add some colour to a fascinating area of Canadian politics.

APPENDIX A

<div align="center">

Trading Places:
Cabinet Ministers with ties to previous parties from 1867 to Present

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Name	Old Party	New Party	Cabinet
Joseph Howe	Anti-Confederate	Liberal-Conservative	Macdonald
Richard Cartwright	Conservative	Liberal	Laurier
Joseph Tarte	Conservative	Liberal	Laurier
John Costigan	Liberal-Conservative	Liberal	Laurier
Alexander Maclean	Liberal	Unionist	Borden
Hugh Guthrie	Liberal	Unionist/Conservative	Borden/Meighen/Bennett
Frank Carvell	Liberal	Unionist	Borden
Thomas Crerar	Unionist	Liberal	King
Robert Forke	Progressive	Liberal	King
Joseph Thorson	Liberal-Progressive	Liberal	King
Humphrey Mitchell	Labour	Liberal	King
James Glen	Liberal-Progressive	Liberal	King
Hazen Argue	New Democrat	Liberal	Trudeau
Marcel Lassard	Social Credit	Liberal	Trudeau
Horace Olsen	Social Credit	Liberal	Trudeau
Jack Horner	Progressive Conservative	Liberal	Trudeau
David Kilgour	Progressive Conservative	Liberal	Chretién
Jean Lapierre	Bloc Quebecois	Liberal	Martin
Scott Brison	Progressive Conservative	Liberal	Martin

* Compiled using information provided by the Library of Parliament website. This list does not consider previous provincial party affiliations.

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