

**IAPR TECHNICAL PAPER SERIES**

**CITY MINISTERS:  
THE LOCAL POLITICS OF CABINET SELECTION**

Anthony M. Sayers  
Department of Political Science  
University of Calgary

December 2006

Technical Paper No. TP-06012

Institute for Advanced Policy Research  
University of Calgary  
Calgary, Alberta  
Canada

<http://www.iapr.ca>  
[iapr@ucalgary.ca](mailto:iapr@ucalgary.ca)

@ by author. All rights reserved. Short sections of text, not to exceed two paragraphs, may be quoted without explicit permission provided that full credit is given to the source.

Correspondence: Anthony M. Sayers, Department of Political Science, University of Calgary, [asayers@ucalgary.ca](mailto:asayers@ucalgary.ca)

# *CITY MINISTERS: THE LOCAL POLITICS OF CABINET SELECTION*

Anthony M. Sayers  
Department of Political Science  
University of Calgary  
asayers@ucalgary.ca

## INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

The character of riding contests at federal elections affects “the way in which the candidate is presented to voters” and their role in their party’s national campaign (Sayers 1999, 109). In the case of urban or city ridings, local candidates often become key players in the national campaign. They act as local spokespeople for the national campaign while transmitting local and regional concerns and interests back to the party. To induce competent candidates to nominate, party leaders may offer them a cabinet appointment, usually contingent on them winning the riding (1999, 44)<sup>2</sup>. If this is true, cabinets should be disproportionately peopled by city MPs.

The central dynamic of the suggested relationship between local electoral politics and cabinet formation is that parties wish to have highly competent candidates able to make the most of the media resources available in these ridings at election time. These features reflect a range of factors that distinguish city ridings from their suburban and rural counterparts. These ridings are densely populated, socially heterogeneous and economically important. City voters tend to be highly educated, mobile and disproportionately involved in associational politics. These ridings are also home to, or adjacent to, the headquarters of major media organizations as well as myriad smaller organizations publications aimed at niche audiences. As well, major commercial and civil

---

<sup>1</sup> I wish to thank David DeGroot for his excellent research assistance

<sup>2</sup> Given that appointed MPs are sometimes made ministers (as in the Harper cabinet of 2006), winning a riding is not a necessary condition for membership of cabinet.

organizations are headquartered nearby. This combination of features marks city ridings as valuable political resources for those prosecuting national and regional election campaigns.

The presence of a media able to give form to the political interests of voters and organizational interests requires candidates in these ridings to deal with a complex political environment and regular media attention. A complex local agenda places city candidates in an ideal position to speak to the myriad of issues that arise in a national campaign. This two way process – keeping the national party informed of important local and regional interests while disseminating the party platform to the region – gives city candidates a critical electoral role, and provides parties with strong incentives to find good candidates in these ridings. Parties have a vested interest in attracting competent, high profile candidates in such ridings, while the complex populations of these ridings provide many potential candidates.

One of the key inducements parties – or more precisely, party leaders – may offer such candidates in order to have them run for election is membership in cabinet, something for which apparently competent MPs capable of dealing with this environment should be well suited. As well, there is now a presumption that these city ridings deserve a member of cabinet. As one MP has noted ‘...you have to have a minister from PEI, you have to make sure you have a minister from the big cities... then you have 100 other factors, demography, ethnicity...’(Kam, 2003). The hypothesis to be tested therefore, is

***H1: Members of Parliament from city constituencies are disproportionately represented in cabinet when compared with their non-city counterparts.***

To begin, I reprise and amend earlier arguments for differential outcomes in the sorts of candidates that are likely to be successful in city, suburban and rural ridings. The

subsequent analysis explores the choice of variables used to distinguish between city, suburban and rural ridings, and uses data from the past five elections to assess whether there are significant and predictable differences in the nature of campaigns and in the probability that an MP selected at random from each category of riding will be a member of cabinet.

The analysis indicates that there is a greater likelihood of MPs from city ridings gaining cabinet positions compared to those from suburban or rural counterparts. To further isolate the impact of this city variable a range of other potential factors that might affect cabinet composition, including occupation, gender, ethnicity, and partisan competitiveness are also tested. None is found to have the level of impact associated with being a city MP. As such, city representation has been added to the already numerous criteria a prime minister must apply in forming a cabinet, reshaping the politics of cabinet composition.

With respect to political parties, this is evidence of their continued development as electoral-professional parties. The choice of candidates reflects the interaction of local conditions and broad electoral and even legislative agendas (Paniabianco, 1988). It also shows how features of the Canadian party system, such as leader veto of nominations, shape representational outcomes and (in this case by bringing supporters into caucus or cabinet) further enhance the power of the leader and prime minister. This is just one of the little-explored consequences of the veto Canadian politics. The synergy between finding good candidates to run in widely-reported city election contests in order to boost the party's regional and national campaign and the appeal of adding known supporter to cabinet is too strong for a prime minister to resist.

It would appear that the tradition of regional ministers is being modified to take account of the growing importance of cities, economically and in terms of population within provinces and regions, and their particular role in elections. All things being equal, modern Canadian cabinets should be more sensitive to the policy interests of cities. Local conditions and effects are critical for understanding the operation of parties, elections and the politics of modern cabinets and executive power.

This has important implications for public policy. While many have suggested that cities are struggling to make their voices heard in the competition for government resources, a lack of representation in cabinet does not appear to be part of this problem. Quite the reverse: cities are over-represented. Cabinets are now likely to disproportionately reflect a subset of opinions found among MPs: those of city voters and members of parliament. There is qualitative evidence to suggest that city MPs, regardless of party, are distinguishable from the suburban and rural counterparts in being more supportive of unregulated markets and less conservative on social issues (Sayers, 1999, Ch. 7). If true, it is reasonable to assume that we can expect these views to be reflected in the decisions of federal cabinets.

### **CITY RIDINGS AND CABINET MINISTERS**

The link between city ridings and cabinet positions has its roots in profound changes that have shaped modern – increasingly urban – societies. City ridings are those few, most urban, ridings across the country. These ridings tend to have complex political agendas and well developed media that give them a special place in election campaigns and political representation and underpin the link between cities and cabinet.

The complex political agendas found in cities reflect the importance of associational relationships and the heterogeneous character of city ridings. Urbanization is accompanied by a move from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesselschaft*; that is, from a society based on communal attachments to one derived from associational relationships. As such, urbanization is more than a shift from less to more populous regions: the very nature of politics is distinctive. This can be seen most clearly with respect to recent country migrants to cities who seek to establish new associational links in order to compensate for the loss of the communal links that still distinguish rural areas and towns. Critical to the importance of associational relationships is the notion of transience: these relationships help mobile individuals meet their psychological need for community (Kasarda and Janowitz 1974, 328-9; Sayers 1999, 110).

In addition, city ridings tend to be socially heterogeneous and ethnically diverse, home to many whose first language is not the dominant one, and peopled by voters with very different levels of economic well being and a wide variety of lifestyles. Together, heterogeneity and associational modes of social organization encourage group-based politics that underpins a complex political agenda.

As a result of transience and heterogeneity, many city voters do not share a common history in the riding. Their understanding of elections and campaigning, and even the nature of their local political community, is as likely to come from the media as it is to be informed by local tradition. In an increasingly group oriented political culture, city voters are likely to identify with one or more of the groups that are involved in debating public policy rather than with a traditional, geographically defined local community.

Party organizers believe that successful brokering of these diverse interests requires a competent, highly educated and socially sophisticated candidate or MP perhaps with a professional background, while less heterogeneous ridings do not demand these skills to the same degree. Whether true or a matter of perception, this underlying view of the special demands city ridings make influences how parties search for candidates (Sayers, 1999, Ch. 3).

The presence of a well-developed media industry in city ridings helps give form to this political agenda and makes it regionally dominant. The location of major media outlets in and around cities reflects the commercial and social significance of cities and their central historical role in the life of a metropolitan region. They are the point from which the rest of the metropolis spreads geographically and economically and play a central role in how residents and outsiders understand the city. As well, cities increasingly dominate their regions and provinces in terms of population and economic and political clout.

The high population densities of cities tends to attract not only large media outlets, but also a range of smaller organizations - for instance, ethnic and lifestyle publications - that help sustain a complex local political environment. Moreover, the media play an important role in the maintenance of the associational relationships upon which the relatively transient city populations rely.

Taken together, complex local agendas and good media coverage have special appeal for political parties. Along with the network of groups that sustain them they provide parties with a means of understanding a range of political interests and communicating with the groups that promote them. This might be done directly – by

meeting with leaders of say business groups or environmental organizations headquartered in the city – or indirectly via the media.

Local campaigns in these ridings must address these many issues, and candidates must be familiar with a range of matters and policy, often acting as spokespeople for their party. Many of the groups that have members in city ridings, and may have regional headquarters there, have members spread across the country. They see elections as an opportunity to have their concerns canvassed, and often use the media in cities to raise issues.

Positive media coverage is a golden resource for any party, particularly at election time. Because media coverage – metropolitan, provincial and national – is based in cities, there is a significant multiplier effect attached to the way in which a party is seen to be managing relations with major social and economic organizations in cities.

For example, media reports of good relations between a party and major business organization housed in downtown Toronto will play well with pro-business voters not only in that metropolitan region, but provincially and even nationally. This is particularly true during elections, when national news organizations are working feverishly to provide daily coverage of the election; stories close to the city headquarters of media organizations are much cheaper and easier to bring to air or print, and are often read across the region or country.

The question for party strategists is how best to make use of the opportunities offered by city ridings. Their preference is for a candidate who can make the most of the available media coverage to help the party's broader campaign. This suggests a candidate comfortable in dealing with the media and who is also able to confidently



articulate the party's position even when confronted with a complex local agenda. Clearly individuals with some experience of public life – high profile candidates – will be well suited to these challenges.

This is reinforced by both the demands made of candidates in city ridings and through this, the perceptions of city voters. Because the political agenda in these ridings is complex, candidates must be adept at dealing with diverse issues and circumstances. City voters get to judge their candidates in this often-intense environment. That is, constant media attention, complex local, regional and national issues, and demands from a diverse group of groups place heavy demands on city candidates.

These pressures are likely to remain, even between elections. The density of social and political organizations in city ridings provides a convenient means for political parties and governments to sustain their connections with civil society. Executive dominated Canadian governments rely heavily on such connections to provide them with critical information on the mood of the wider society, and in return, use these connections to help manage the relationship between government and society (Pal, 1993). As well, media looking to make sense of a wide range of issues are likely to seek out nearby city MPs. If they are competent media performers, this becomes a reinforcing cycle – the media seeking out high profile MPs, and parties providing such MPs for city ridings.

Political parties know that city riding MPs will play a key role in both their election and inter-election activities. If political parties and governments are to make the most of the opportunities provided by city ridings – media coverage, access to a complex political environment – then it makes sense to aim to provide high profile candidates and MPs to these ridings. For the government, this means there are strong incentives to

ensure high profile competent MPs - just those who are likely to make it into cabinet – represent these ridings. For their part, city voters will come to expect regular representation in the cabinet. As a result, there should be a disproportionate numbers of city MPs in cabinet.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The central claim to be tested here requires there to be identifiable, salient differences in the social composition and politics of city, suburban and country ridings. In order to test this claim, it is necessary to construct a reliable means of categorizing ridings in this way and in particular, of distinguishing city ridings from others.

### *Measures*

Examining the relationship between city ridings and cabinet appointments is difficult because conventional definitions of urban areas are too expansive. For example, Statistics Canada defines “urban” as an “area with a population of at least 1,000 and no fewer than 400 persons per square kilometre” (Statistics Canada, 2001a). However, according to this definition 78% of Canadians live in urban areas (Statistics Canada, 2001b, 9). Moreover, this definition does not accurately capture our geographical unit of measurement, i.e. the electoral riding. For instance, one riding may encompass several urban areas or one urban area may encompass several ridings. As a result, more accurate indicators are needed to determine those ridings that are city ridings. For our purposes eight characteristics are used to describe city ridings. While many mirror the urban characteristics discussed above, we amend these with others that geographers use as descriptors for cities.

*Density:* There are two limitations to using density as an indicator of city ridings. First, it is a relatively crude indicator for identifying social change or characteristics, such as the shift from *Gemeinshcaft* to *Gesellshcaft* that drive the changes noted here. Second, researchers have noted, “the most immediate physical characteristic of Canadian cities is their low density and extensive development pattern” (Thraves, 1991, 271). In spite of its limitations its capacity to make broad distinctions - density does increase as one moves from country to suburban and finally city ridings – makes it a widely used measure with the advantages of being both linear and simple to apply. So while it does not directly identify social features, it creates a continuum along which our three types of ridings are logically distributed and is a good initial indicator that ties in with other research on social change.

*Private Dwellings:* A number of factors associated with housing and housing stock as well as mobility help us to distinguish various types of ridings and in particular, city constituencies. Kasarda and Janowitz suggest that transience is the primary characteristic of city centres (Kasarda and Janowitz 1974, 328-9). As well, the mobility of city voters indicated by “...substantial numbers of voters living in high-rise apartments” (many of them renters) has shaped the organizational and campaigning behaviour of parties (Sayers, 1999, 115). The rental population and the number of individuals who have moved since the last year provide strong indicators of transience within different ridings and distinguish city ridings by their high levels of mobility. Analysis of the value of private dwellings is also useful as research suggests that Canadian city centres can be distinguished “in terms of land values and bid rents”

(Collins, 1991, 156). In general, due to higher surrounding commercial prices, residential home prices and rents in city centres are higher than surrounding areas.

*Immigrants:* City centres “tend to be occupied by more recent immigrant groups” than either sub-urban or rural centres (Collins, 1991, 163). For example, in the 1990s Citizenship and Immigration Canada reported that 94% of immigrants settled in urban areas. Moreover, 80% settled in the census metropolitan areas of Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2001). As well, rental availabilities in city downtowns encourage new immigrants to settle there. To capture this, the measure includes the proportion of the population constituted by immigrants.

*Ethnic Heterogeneity:* One result of heavy immigration to cities is the creation of “very different ethnic profiles in metropolitan centres, ensuring that there are considerable ethnic variations in the social balance of these centres” (Davies, 1993, 112). Put differently, by comparison country ridings, though not always suburban ridings, are generally more socially homogenous (Sayers, 1999, 112). While it does not always distinguish city ridings from their suburban cousins, in general the three categories of ridings cluster in a predictable pattern from country, to suburban and city, with the latter being the most ethnically diverse.

*Occupation:* Since World War II, the occupation structures of cities have been characterized by specialization in service/corporate based occupations (Davies, 1993, 110). This suggests an increase in the proportion of individuals involved in managerial, financial and/or administrative occupations. While this distinguishes city from suburban ridings, many country ridings require managerial staff to run primary sector industries. In order to clearly distinguish city and country ridings the measure takes account of the

percentage of the population employed in the primary sector. Together, these two variables provide a strong indication of the occupational and industrial structure of a riding and help us to distinguish city from suburban and country ridings.

*Education:* Country ridings are likely to have lower levels of post-secondary education while suburban and city ridings are likely to have higher education levels (Sayers, 1999, 112-116). Because high levels of education do not always translate into economic success for individuals in big cities, in combination with economic indicators, this measure helps distinguish well educated and economically homogeneous suburban from well educated but economically heterogeneous city populations.

*Age:* Urban geographers note “the elderly are usually over-concentrated in core areas or older suburban locations” (Thraves, 1991, 273). This is most likely due to older settlement patterns coupled with city expansion. Again, while not a robust measure in and of itself, as it does not help us distinguish between city and some older suburban ridings, in combination with our other measures it strengthens our capacity to identify different types of ridings.

In sum, the index of city-ness, or city index, combines measures for population density, dwelling types, immigration, ethnic heterogeneity, education, occupation and age (see Appendix A1). This is then used to explore whether MPs from city ridings are more likely to be appointed to cabinet than their suburban or country colleagues.

## **DATA**

Data was collected from Statistics Canada, Elections Canada and Eagles et al. (Eagles et al., 1991) for the 1984, 1988, 1993, 1997 and 2000 Canadian federal elections. To simplify the analysis, we only deal with the cabinet formed immediately following these

elections. In each case, to ensure that the data was as accurate an indicator of each riding at the time of the election, the most recent census was applied to the most recent representation order. Table 1 outlines the data source for each election year along with which representation order and which census was applied in each case.

**Table 1: Source Data**

<b>Election Year</b>	<b>Representation Order</b>	<b>Census</b>
1984	1976	1981
1988 <sup>β</sup>	1987	1987
1993	1987	1991
1997	1996	1996
2000	1996	2001

<sup>β</sup> Data for the 1988 election is different than the other elections due to a lack of readily available data at Statistics Canada. Data for this election has been drawn from Munroe Eagles et al., *The Almanac of Canadian Politics* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1991).

Five elections have been used for a number of reasons. These elections include both Liberal and Conservative majorities and allow us to test whether the relationship holds regardless of the party that forms government. And, as noted by Alan Cairns (Cairns, 1968), the present electoral system exacerbates regional tendencies and thus most federal majorities do not have complete national representation. These patterns tend to vary depending on which party forms government. These elections allow us to test our hypothesis when each region has strong representation within the government party. The 2004 and 2006 elections are excluded because the small size of government caucuses in minority caucuses greatly restricts the prime minister's choices with regard to cabinet composition, particularly in some regions.

### *Tests*

The city index can test the relationship between urban ridings and cabinet ministers in three ways. First, by gauging the extent to which ridings represented by both cabinet ministers and backbench MPs are city ridings. In each instance, ridings represented by

non-government parties are excluded, as these ridings cannot receive cabinet representation. In addition, contingency tables are used to test the likelihood that the thirty most city ridings receive cabinet representation.

Second, a binary logistics regression for the 2000 election is used to investigate the relative effects of social background *and* riding characteristics on the likelihood of cabinet membership. This allows us to determine whether riding characteristics or personal characteristics are more important in shaping cabinet representation.

Finally, given Canada's pattern of regional representation (Carty et. al., 2001), it is necessary to test each region separately to ensure the pattern holds across Canada. As it is only possible to test this in regions where the government has substantial representation, the government party must have at least 20 seats within a given region for the test to be applied.

## **DISCUSSION**

Disaggregating the measures used in our city index, Table 2 uses the 2000 election to illustrate the relationship between riding characteristics and membership of cabinet as opposed to the backbench. It suggests that the ridings from which cabinet ministers are drawn are indeed more likely to possess the characteristics associated with cities compared with those from which backbenchers come. As these are population rather than sample data, significance is not strictly relevant. However, it is worth noting that density, age distribution, transience and ethnic makeup are distinctive enough to be statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). More importantly, however, the table confirms that the ridings from which cabinet ministers are drawn display characteristics consistent with all of our definitions of city ridings. For example, they have higher land values, more immigrants,

more minorities, more individuals with high education, and less primary sector employment.

**Table 2: Riding Characteristics by MP Status, 2000**

	<b>Backbench MPs</b>	<b>Cabinet MPs</b>
<i>Geographic Descriptors</i>		
Land Value	\$171,111.37	\$186,681.35
Density	1342.60	2650.74
<i>Social Descriptors</i>		
Elderly	11.87%	13.37%
Transience	32.35%	43.81%
Immigrants	19.58%	26.91%
University Education	18.22%	21.52%
Minorities	13.88%	19.74%
Ethnic Homogeneity <sup>1</sup>	.7870	.6863
<i>Economic Descriptors</i>		
Primary Sector Employment	3.76%	2.63%
Business Sector Employment	27.01%	29.25%

1. A lower score indicates greater *heterogeneity*.

This preliminary evidence from the 2000 election suggests the proposed relationship between cabinet membership and urban-ness exists. To test this across time, an index based on these measures is applied to the other four elections. Figure 1 illustrates the average urban or city-ness of the ridings from which each group of MPs – cabinet, governing party, parliament as a whole – are drawn for all five of the elections examined. Ridings represented by Cabinet are consistently more urban than ridings represented by backbench MPs.



**Figure 1: City Index by Parliamentary Group over Time<sup>3</sup>**

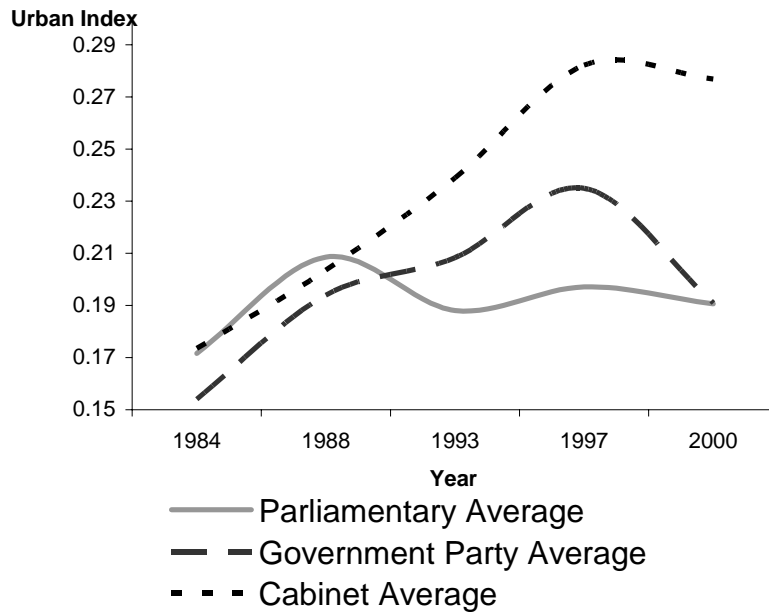


Figure 1 applies the measures outlined in Table 2 to each federal election from 1984 to 2000. The stability of the parliamentary measure indicates that despite some subtle differences in the variables used for each election (see Appendix A) the index creates a relatively stable measure across elections.<sup>4</sup> Figure 1 indicates that, regardless of party affiliation, cabinet is more likely to be more urban than is the governing party caucus, though there are some fascinating partisan differences. While the Tory cabinet from 1984 to 1993 was more urban than its caucus, particularly after 1984 as seen in Table 3, the PC governments' party average in both 1984 and 1988 is lower than the parliamentary average, indicating the rural character of these governments. Or put differently, the Liberal and New Democratic parties were more urban than the Tory

<sup>3</sup> A smooth curve function is used here for illustrative purposes. In fact, the data is discrete, being the cabinet composition at each national election.

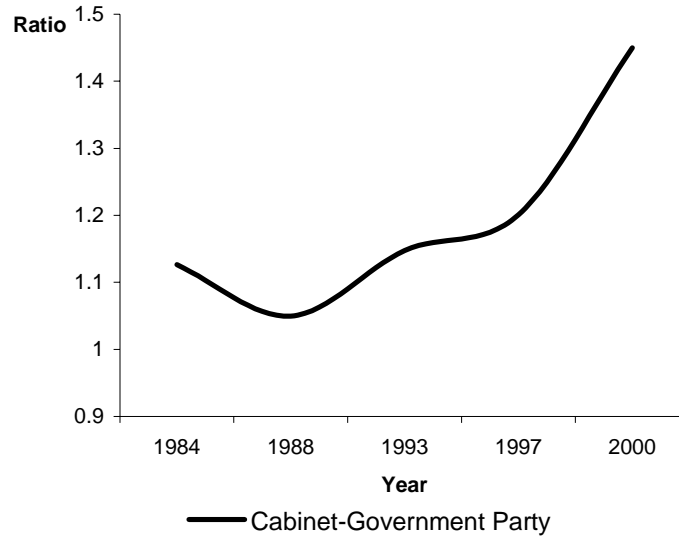
<sup>4</sup> Because of how city-ness is defined, the number and proportion of urban, suburban and rural seats changes over time as their underlying social composition changes. Since the measure of urban-ness is relative from one election to the next, these figures do not allow us to test any impact of the absolute increase in the population of Canada's cities on the selection of cabinet members.

government during this period. This is reinforced by the fact that since 1993, the governing party average is above that of the parliament as a whole - indicating the urban nature of the Liberal caucus (and cabinet) when compared with its major opponents.

Overall, the Liberal Party is more urban than the Tories and Reform/Alliance, even in opposition. Accordingly, while the cabinet-city riding relationship holds for both Progressive Conservatives and Liberals, the difference between cabinet and parliament is much more pronounced after 1993. As well, in 1993 and 1997, the gap between the governing party and the parliamentary average widens, reflecting the more rural character of both the western-based Alliance and the Bloc Québécois, the latter strong outside Montréal. Growth in the non-rural representation garnered by the Alliance and Bloc in 2000 is evident in the decline of the Liberal city index, as it relies more heavily on non-city MPs for its majority. Most importantly, the period of Liberal government also demonstrates the relative over-representation of city ridings in cabinet compared with the urban – non-urban balance of MPs in the governing party and for this period, the parliament as a whole.

In addition, Figure 1 seems to suggest that cabinet representation is becoming more city-focused over time. The predicted relationship – that cabinet is more urban than either party caucus or parliament – has held, and in fact, strengthened over time. If anything, cabinet is becoming more urban while parliament in general becomes less so. This can be more sharply demonstrated using a ratio of average cityness of cabinet with that of the average cityness of the governing party, as in Figure 2. This demonstrates that the extent to which cabinet is increasingly more urban than its party caucus, particularly for the Liberal government after the 2000 election.

**Figure 2: Ratio of Cabinet City Index to Government Party City Index<sup>5</sup>**



Another way to test the relationship between cabinet and urban-ness is to compare the likelihood of being appointed to a cabinet position as an MP from the thirty most urban ridings versus that for all other ridings. Thirty has been selected because it is approximately the number of cabinet positions available in each government. As such, if our relationship holds perfectly, these ridings should receive 100% representation while the rest receive no representation. Table 3 indicates that, while the range is quite large, on average, 32.2% of MPs from city ridings receive cabinet representation, compared to only 18.4% of non-city ridings. Given that city ridings represent approximately 10% of all constituencies, the level of representation they receive in cabinet is disproportionately high. The 1997 Liberal government experience suggests that relative success of the party across the country. Jean Chrétien had more non-city MPs to call upon than in either 1997 or 2000.

---

<sup>5</sup> As for figure 1, the data are smoothed for illustrative purposes.

**Table 3: Percent Receiving Cabinet Positions, Non-City v. City**

	Percent Receiving Cabinet Positions	
	Non-City	City
2000	19%	30%
1997	19%	42%
1993	17%	15%
1988	21%	36%
1984	16%	38%
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>18.4%</b>	<b>32.2%</b>

*Personal Characteristics and Cabinet Selection*

Having used basic comparisons to determine the directionality of our hypothesis, it remains to consider other factors that may influence cabinet representation and the degree to which they might do so in comparison with city effects. By applying a binary logistical analysis to the most recent election in the data set, 2000, election, it is possible to test the likelihood that women, minorities, lawyers, and those with graduate level education received cabinet positions as opposed to the MPs representing the top 30 city ridings. Each of these other variables was selected because they represent groups seeking cabinet representation or because they might describe high quality candidates. Put differently, is urban-ness simply a surrogate for these other characteristics? For the personal descriptors each variable used is a dummy variable with data collected from the Library of Parliament or the Parliamentary Guide (see Appendix A2).

An additional concern is how the variation in regional distribution of government seats affects cabinet composition. Docherty has noted that regional disparities in partisan representation that may decrease or increase the likelihood of cabinet representation among certain regions (Docherty, 2002, 350). A national measure of city-ness may well exclude some regions (the most urban ridings in some provinces may not register on such

a list). Because of variations in partisan representation by region, a prime minister may be choosing from a limited number of city MPs or even the reverse, a limited number of rural MPs, the latter biasing any measures in favour of our hypothesis. For instance, if there are no Saskatchewan ridings in the mix, it is not possible to for an effect in that province. It is necessary to identify the impact of cityness at the sub-national level. The city index used in Table 4 is calculated in such a way as to act as a control for regional variations in representation. This method assumes that the government won every riding in Canada and that the prime minister was therefore free to choose members of cabinet from any riding in any region. Each riding is given a ‘regional city index’ that the ratio of its cityness to that of the region. The top 30 most urban of these ridings are then included in the overall measure of cityness in Table 4. This ratio is therefore a more rigorous test of our hypothesis. We use the 2000 as a test of the impact of factors other than riding characteristics. In this case, the Liberal’s western representation was strongly urban, so the measure is designed to identify whether it was the *most* urban, or city ridings held by the Liberals that gained cabinet representation.

**Table 4: Impact of Personal Characteristics on Cabinet Selection, 2000**

	Beta Value	Standard Error	Binary Estimation
City	1.373 <sup>α</sup>	.495	3.95
High Education	-.026	.450	0.97
Lawyer	.276	.494	1.32
Sex	.059	.476	1.06
Minority	-.483	.616	0.62

Constant

-2.497

.273

R<sup>2</sup>

.089 (Nagelkerke)

.045 (Cox & Snell)

α: p < 0.01.

Table 4 indicates that, even with the unreal assumptions of MPs from every riding being included as a possible candidate for cabinet, riding characteristics easily outweigh personal characteristics in shaping cabinet composition, reinforcing our earlier findings.

None of the personal characteristics of cabinet ministers result in a significant increase in cabinet representation. To be careful, this does not mean that cabinet ministers are uneducated and/or unqualified. Rather, it means there are proportionally just as many highly educated and qualified individuals in the backbench as there are in cabinet. Only the riding characteristics are significant. Importantly, Table 4 reveals that the likelihood of an MP from a city riding receiving a cabinet position are 3.95 times higher than the likelihood of a non-city MP receiving a cabinet position, and that this is the only significant variable.

### *Regional Patterns*

An alternative approach to regional effects is to only consider those regions that have adequate representation from the governing party to allow the prime minister to make choices between city and non-city MP in creating a cabinet. Accordingly, each region with 20 or more seats in each election is analyzed to determine whether, when given the choice, the Cabinet is selected predominantly from city ridings. The same measures as in Table 2 are used to create list of city and non-city seats for those regions where the government has 20 or more seats. As Table 5 illustrates, when given adequate selection, a majority of cabinet members are selected from city ridings for most elections. Only in Atlantic Canada is there any serious challenge to this pattern of behaviour.

**Table 5: Direction of Relationship Given Significant Choice**

	1984	1988	1993	1997	2000
Atlantic	√	---	X	---	X <sup>1</sup>
Quebec	√	X	---	√	√
Ontario	√	√	√	√	√
West	√	√	√	---	---

Yes (√), No (X), Insufficient Choice (---)

<sup>1</sup> In 2000, the Liberals received 19 seats in Atlantic Canada, but it has been included due to the few number of seats and the relatively high degree of representation.

## **City Ministers**

The debate over the role of regional ministers as powerbrokers in cabinet is central to “the nature of modern cabinets [and] concerns the degree to which the role of regional ministers has declined over the last half century” (Sayers, 2002: 310). According to some authors, the growth of the administrative state leaves senior ministers with relatively few discretionary powers (Cairns, 1979: 6; Smiley, 1980: 134). However, others argue that ministers have taken advantage of project funding opportunities to etch out a role in directing resources (Bakvis, 1991: 287-289). Both sides agree, however, that the centralization of the federal executive and replacement of regional party organizations with assertive provincial ones has altered the nature of regional representation (Sayers, 2002: 310). Against this it can be suggested that while there are regional ministers in cabinet, the selection of an MP join cabinet reflects a range of considerations, one among which is whether or not he or she represents a city riding. Because of their reason for being in cabinet may be as much about their capacity to represent a city, pthey are likely to view their role differently from ministers who owe their place in cabinet primarily to their role as a regional powerbroker. It is perhaps the novelty of this new form of regional representation that prevents traditional accounts of cabinet politics from explaining changing patterns of cabinet composition and why a sound understanding of local conditions remains critical to a comprehensive account of national cabinet politics.

## **CONCLUSION**

A complete picture of the impact of rural, urban and suburban MPs on policymaking requires us to understand variations in representation within the various branches of

government. This study indicates that MPs from city ridings are more likely to find their way into cabinet than their non-city counterparts. This reinforces earlier research that argues that the character of riding politics has far-reaching implications for candidate types and governance in general (Sayers, 1999). *Ceteris paribus*, one would expect a disproportionately urban cabinet to more readily engage with the concerns of city folk than one dominated by rural MPs. This development suggests a sharpening distinction between the over-representation of rural Canada in the parliament, which is sometimes cited as a reason why governments are not responsive to the needs of cities, and the character of cabinet representation. It appears that the recent tendency to bemoan a failure by governments to address city issues does not reflect a lack of urban representation in the central, national policymaking body, cabinet.

To the degree cabinet membership is important to career advancement, ambitious candidates or MPs should seek out city ridings. Tony Valeri's behaviour in Hamilton prior to the 2004 federal election, where he and Sheila Copps fought an unseemly nomination battle, may be one recent example of this dynamic. As well, instances of leaders parachuting candidates into ridings in the hope of shaping the membership of cabinet are likely to be found disproportionately in urban ridings. The failed attempts by Liberals Glenn Murray in Winnipeg and of Bev Longstaff in Calgary in 2004 are recent examples of this phenomenon. Prime Minister Stephen Harper's appointment of Michael Fortier to the Senate in 2006 in order to secure Montreal a seat in cabinet and his wooing of David Emerson that saw the Vancouver Liberal cross the floor of the Commons to become a Conservative minister suggests just how important cities have become to cabinet formation.



Modern cabinet formation is directly shaped by the local electoral politics of cities. Prime ministers, once mainly concerned to balance regional interests in forming cabinet, now have added concerns to take into account. Mr Diefenbaker chose to be sensitive to ethnicity in building a cabinet, and this is now a concern for all prime ministers, as is gender since the late 1960s and early 70s. The additional requirement of providing representation from cities in cabinet is a further constraint on prime ministers. Meeting these demands may be one reason why there is some evidence that leaders have become more indicative in who runs for the party. Combined with increased urbanization, and the growing importance of cities, it appears that prime ministers are likely to consider these city ministers as the most likely candidates for regional ministers, modifying the most traditional of cabinet patterns. As recent experience has shown, this is particular so when the government has few MPs in a region. Such ministers are likely to see their tasks – both in terms of representing the government to the region and the interests of the region to the government – in a manner distinctive from those of previous eras who were appointed directly on the strength of their regional connections. Cabinets are more likely to consist of city MPs whose view of politics and their region is informed by an urban ethic.

## REFERENCES

- Bakvis, Herman. 1991. *Regional Ministers: Power and Influence in the Canadian Cabinet*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Cairns, Alan C. 1968. "The Electoral System and the Party System in Canada, 1921-1965," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 55-80.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1979. *From Interstate to Intrastate Federalism in Canada*. Kingston: Institute for Intergovernmental Relations.
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada. 2003. "Immigrants in Canada: Census 2001 Highlights" *The Monitor*. Summer, p6.
- Collins, Lyndhurst. 1991. "Canadian Cities: Recent Developments and the Changing Image", in Guy M. Robinson ed. *A Social Geography of Canada*. Toronto: Dundurn Press.
- Davies, W.K.D. 1993. "Metropolitan Dominance and Differentiation in Canada" in W.K.D. Davies ed. *Canadian Transformations: Perspectives on a Changing Human Geography*. Swansea: University of Wales Canadian Studies Group.
- Eagles, M., J. Bickerton, A. Gagnon and P. Smith. 1991. *The Almanac of Canadian Politics*. Peterborough: Broadview Press.
- Kam, Christopher 2003. Personal Interview, Liberal Party MP, Ottawa, Canada.
- Kasarda, John D. and Morris Janowitz. 1974. "Community Attachment in Mass Society", *American Sociological Review*. 39: 328-339.
- Pal, Leslie. 1993. *Interest of State: The Politics of Language, Multiculturalism and Feminism in Canada*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press.
- Panbianco, Angelo. 1988. *Political Parties: Organization and Power* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sayers, Anthony M. 1999. *Parties, Candidates and Constituency Campaigns in Canadian Elections*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Sayers, Anthony M. 2002. "The Study of Political Leaders and Activists", in Joanna Everitt and Brenda O'Neill eds. *Citizen Politics: Research and Theory in Canadian Political Behaviour*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Smiley, Donald. 1980. *Canada in Question: Federalism in the Eighties*. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
- Statistics Canada, 1981, 1986, 1991, 1996 and 2001. Semi-Custom Census Profiles Applied to the 1976, 1987, 1996 Representation Orders.

Statistics Canada, 2001a. *Geography, 2001 Census Dictionary*,  
<http://www.statcan.ca/english/census2001/dict/geotoc.htm> accessed April 16, 2004.

Statistics Canada. 2001b. *Rural and Small Town Canada Analysis Bulletin* 3.3: 14.

Thraves, Bernard D. 1991. "Urban Canada 2001" Guy M. Robinson ed. *A Social Geography of Canada*. Toronto: Dundurn Press.

## Appendix A1: Operationalization of the City Index

The city index had a hypothetical range of 0 to 1; however, given the structure of the variables, the index typically ranged from .15 to .50.

*Riding Density*: each riding's basic density was calculated as "population/km<sup>2</sup>" using Elections Canada data, after which the density of each riding was divided by the value of the most densely populated riding.

*Residential Land Value*: each riding's average land value, as determined by Statistics Canada, was divided by the value of the riding with the highest land value.

*Proportion Immigrants*: as determined by Statistics Canada, the total number of immigrants as a percent of the total population.

*Proportion Minorities*: as determined by Statistics Canada, the total number of visible minorities as a percent of the total population.

*Ethnic Homogeneity*: using the ethnic groups reported by Statistics Canada, a 0 to 1 value was created using the Herfindahl index, as defined by:

$$EDI = \sum_{i=1}^n (E_i)^2$$

Where  $E_i$  is ethnic group  $i$ 's proportion of the total population in the district and  $n = x$  ethnic groups. If all  $x$  ethnic groups are of equal size in a riding then the EDI would be equal to .10. Ridings dominated by one ethnic groups will be associated with EDI measures approximating 1. Description based on Munroe Eagles et al, *The Almanac of Canadian Politics* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1995).

*Proportion High Education*: as determined by Statistics Canada, the number of individuals with university education as a percent of the total population.

*Proportion Elderly*: as determined by Statistics Canada, the number of elderly individuals as a percent of the total population.

*Proportion Movers*: as determined by Statistics Canada, the number of individuals who moved residence in the past year as a percent of the total population.

*Proportion Renters*: as determined by Statistics Canada, the number of individuals who rented as a percent of the total population.

*Proportion Business Industry Classification*: as determined by Statistics Canada, the number of individuals in industries related to finance, insurance, and business services as a percent of the total population.

*Proportion Business Occupation Classification*: as determined by Statistics Canada, the number of individuals employed in occupations related to management, business, finance and/or administration as a percent of the total population.

*Proportion Primary Sector Industry Classification:* as determined by Statistics Canada, the number of individuals in industries related to agriculture, fishing, trapping, logging, forestry, mining and quarrying as a percent of the total population.

*Proportion Primary Sector Occupation Classification:* as determined by Statistics Canada, the number of individuals employed in occupations unique to the primary sector as a percent of the total population.

Due to differences in measurement over time, not all the variables selected were available for each election year. At a minimum 7 variables were used and at a maximum all 13 were used. This information is outlined in the table below.

Variable	Election Years				
	2000	1997	1993	1988	1984
<i>Geographic Descriptor</i>					
Riding Density	√	√	√	√	√
Residential Land Value	√	√	√	√	
<i>Social Descriptors</i>					
Proportion Immigrants	√	√	√	√	√
Proportion Minorities	√	√			
Ethnic Homogeneity	√	√			
Proportion High Education	√	√	√	√	√
Proportion Elderly	√	√	√	√	√
Proportion Transience					
<i>Movers</i>		√	√	√	
<i>Renter</i>	√	√	√	√	√
<i>Economic Descriptors<sup>6</sup></i>					
Proportion Business					
<i>Industry Classification</i>		√	√	√	√
<i>Occupation Classification</i>	√	√			
Proportion Primary Sector					
<i>Industry Classification</i>		√	√	√	√
<i>Occupation Classification</i>	√	√			
Cronbach's Alpha	.892	.890	.851	.839	.806

Despite the differences in measures used the inter-reliability of the variables in each election years illustrates that our variables are reliable indicators of city ridings.

<sup>6</sup> In 1997 Statistics Canada used both occupation and industry to measure primary, secondary and tertiary employment. As a result for this year the two variables have been averaged to avoid duplication.

## **Appendix A2: Operationalization for the Binary Logistics Regression**

For the binary logistics regression the following dummy variables were created.

*City*: since only ridings representing government were selected, each riding's city index was divided by the average value of the index for each region (Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, West) to control for regional discrepancies in partisan representation. In this manner, Liberal representation in Western Canada was not washed out by their urban domination in this region. Following the creation of this index the top 30 ridings were selected as being "city ridings", and given a value of 1.

*Sex*: Using data provided by the Library of Parliament, any female MP was given a value of 1.

*Minorities*: Using data provided by the Library of Parliament, any MP born outside of Canada (excluding the US and the UK) was given a value of 1.

*High Education*: Using the Canadian Parliamentary Guide for the 2000 election, any MP with graduate education (M.A., M.S., M.S.W., M. Div., L.L.M., M.B.A.) was given a value of 1.

*Lawyer*: Using the Canadian Parliamentary Guide for the 2000 election, any MP whose occupation was listed as "lawyer" was given a value of 1.