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# The State of the Canadian Appointment Process After Liberal Reforms

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**The State of the Canadian Appointment Process After Liberal Reforms**

By

Tyler M. Romualdi

An Internship Paper

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies

through the Department of Political Science

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree of Master of Arts

at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2020

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# **The State of the Canadian Appointment Process After Liberal Reforms**

By

**Tyler M. Romualdi**

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December 11, 2019

## **DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

In 2016, the newly elected Liberal government introduced reforms to the appointments system following well established partisan selections by previous governments. The government claimed that the new policy would provide Canadians with a more honourable, merit-based appointment process that would be free from political interference. This paper assesses the extent to which the objectives of the new policy came to fruition. The research examines the process of citizen participation by evaluating 1,168 Governor-in-Council (GIC) appointments made by the Liberal government to 204 federal institutions over the first four years of the program. The paper compares this group to 1,428 GIC appointments made by the former Conservative government during its final term in office. The research explores whether the reforms have changed the type and quality of appointments to federal organizations since the new system came into effect. The analysis uses the publicly available demographic information of geographic location, educational background, occupation, and gender for each appointee. This paper provides critical insight into current and future processes of citizen participation and discusses its implications for democratic politics in Canada. The research shows that the Liberal reforms did not improve the quality of appointments to federal organizations. The relevant demographic information for the Liberal appointees was similar to that of the Harper government, which meant the new changes tended to focus on representation rather than qualifications.

## **DEDICATION**

To my Grandmother, Evelyn, for her listening ear, and unwavering interest in my academic pursuits.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/SYMBOLS

Agencies, Boards, Commissions .....	ABCs
Federal Appointments Index .....	FAI
Governor-in-Council .....	GIC
Member of Parliament .....	MP
National Occupation Classification .....	NOC
Prime Minister .....	PM
Prime Minister's Office .....	PMO
Privy Council Office .....	PCO
Public Service Commission .....	PSC
Public Service Employment Act .....	PESA

## **Introduction**

In 2016, the newly elected Liberal government introduced reforms to the appointments system following well established partisan selections by previous governments. The former policy ostensibly let ministers stack government agencies with party supporters or ‘friends’ of the government, even if they lacked qualifications for such positions. These issues projected an image of government as self-serving and incapable of making organizations more efficient (Savoie, 2013, p.16). The Liberal government, under Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, promised to launch an open, transparent, and merit-based selection process to help ministers identify and recommend the best people for high-level positions in agencies, boards, commissions (ABCs), Crown corporations, and tribunals (Zimonjic, 2016). This paper seeks to answer the question of whether the reforms improved the quality of appointments to federal ABCs.

## **Literature Review**

### *Building a Good Board*

Previous scholarly work has demonstrated that the Canadian government’s appointment practices are polarizing. Failed attempts to limit the amount of patronage and organized corruption in the appointments to federal ABCs have shown this. Savoie (2013) explains that there is no optimal form of organization in the public sector, nor widely accepted theory to explain how the government decides and why (27). However, new research suggests that the focus should be on giving appointees proper governance training to help them serve the public more effectively. This idea assumes that every appointee wants to do a good job but lacks some knowledge to be an effective leader in the public sector. Richard Leblanc, a law, governance, and ethics professor at York University, is one of Canada’s leading experts on corporate governance and accountability. Leblanc has published several books that provide a framework for public, private, and non-profit leaders to address some of the main issues with accountability, diversity, and decision-making that

have affected many organizations. He argues that a successful board can overcome these issues by training its members in governance codes, risk management, diversity, and inclusion programs, corporate responsibility, and performance evaluation (Leblanc, 2016, p.49). These areas represent best practices in corporate governance that, if followed effectively, could resolve some of the problems associated with the people appointed to Canadian ABCs.

In business, a board has to make decisions that satisfy and maintain the confidence of its shareholders. The approach to politics should be no different, as members appointed to ABCs must remember that their responsibility is to Canadians, not the government that appointed them. The first step in achieving this is to identify good leaders. Leblanc (2016) stresses the importance of having competent directors who are fully committed to leadership, collaboration, and allowing staff to excel in their role (36). The next step often involves bringing in watchdog officials to monitor the organization's activities. Once the board has good leaders in place, it is useful to hire independent executives to address conflicts of interest, advise hiring and promotion decisions, and provide an outside perspective on the organization's day-to-day operations (50). By choosing to follow these practices, directors send a clear message to members of the board that they expect accountability and sound decision-making throughout the organization, especially in the boardroom.

For all appointees, it is necessary to learn more about corporate governance codes. According to Leblanc (2016), a great board understands its importance and responsibility to society by conducting audits of an organization's efficiency, developing whistleblowing procedures to identify corruption, and following a mutually agreed-upon code of ethics and conduct (49). The idea here is that every board member must buy into a goal designed to add value to society, rather than an exclusive group of people. Also, board governance can improve by

following proper risk management techniques. Leblanc (2016) explains that each board is responsible for ensuring that it identifies, evaluates, and suitably manages all of its risks (58). These practices usually require a board to acknowledge each risk and make adjustments to its plan when the perceived issue outweighs any potential reward. Leblanc (2016) believes that some boards have inadequate risk management policies, causing many organizations to scramble when it must deal with unanticipated financial, operational, and legal issues (59). As a result, training board members about how to properly evaluate and handle risk is an essential component of improving people's decision-making and board governance more broadly.

Board governance can also improve by increasing diversity. Previously, many boards consisted of male, frail (elderly), pale (lack of ethnic diversity), and stale (not up to date) members (Leblanc, 2016, p.50). These people are not reflective of Canada's diversity and share similar ideas about how to lead. Leblanc (2016) found that these types of boards fall into the trap of groupthink, where views go unchallenged, and there is a lack of innovative thought (50). As a result, organizations should try to establish a gender-balanced board to increase diversity and creativity. Leblanc (2016) found that having more women on boards improved the timeliness of people's attendance, quality of discussion, and overall approach to risk (52).

The second way to improve board performance is by focusing on skills for board appointees. For example, many boards have members with training and experience in one or more of the following areas: accounting, agriculture, business, economics, education, engineering, industrial relations, information technology, law, medicine, manufacturing, natural, or applied sciences, public policy, and regulation, amongst many others. Leblanc (2016) believes that the more diverse a board becomes, the better it will be at resolving issues surrounding performance, strategy, and risk (50). The argument to be made here is that a person's appointment should become

less relevant if their skills address a board's needs because they can learn proper governance techniques.

Lastly, the most effective boards practice corporate responsibility and have performance evaluation techniques in place. According to Leblanc (2016), one of the roles of a board is to enhance its corporate reputation and brand image. They must also build relationships with communities, and regulators, while boosting workplace morale and productivity by supporting employees (57). A good board also develops a clear and measurable performance evaluation to gauge organizational success. Leblanc (2016) explains that these evaluations look at the tone set by the CEO, workplace dynamics, and the diversity, skill set, and knowledge of its members. It also assesses the direction, leadership, stakeholder relations, reporting measures, code of ethics, risk management and governance policies, and overall performance of an organization (67). Usually, the board of directors outlines these things in a governance document to ensure it is ready for audits or performance reviews at any time. The key takeaway here is that Leblanc has presented an efficient governance model that Canadian ABCs can follow. The argument that places the onus on boards to teach and enforce good governance practices regardless of how the members got there is compelling and something that future research should consider.

### *The History of Reforms*

Changes to the federal appointments policy are not new to Canadians, as previous governments have made incremental attempts to improve the process. Initial Canadian governments used the appointment system to reward friends and supporters. These governments saw no problem with appointing people to serve the public who shared similar ideas with the government of the day. However, the public's tolerance of patronage and its rewards system for party supporters has declined over a century. Scratch (2006) identified the Borden government's decision to provide military personnel with inadequate clothing and equipment, in favour of

profiteering activities by government-friendly businesses during World War I to be a significant turning point (2). Due to this controversy, Prime Minister Borden introduced a notable reform to lessen the impact of patronage by passing the *Civil Service Act* (1918). Scratch (2006) explains that the act established merit as the central criterion for public service hiring and promotion by using a competitive assessment to identify good candidates (9). The legislation tried to legitimize the quality and type of people appointed to federal organizations by identifying individuals with specialized and technical skills to serve a specific purpose. The merit principle also tried to address the size and complexity of government, unionization, and public frustration over political interference in hopes of shedding democratic deficit concerns in Canada (2).

The legislative reform resulted in sweeping changes to the way the government was mandated to conduct public appointments. However, the impact of patronage remained a fundamental concern for government officials attempting to fill public service vacancies. In 1984, PM Pierre Trudeau appointed more than 70 Liberal friends and insiders to various GIC positions before leaving office (Brock & Shepherd, 2018, p.14). This problem became worse when newly elected Liberal leader John Turner announced that his government would not rescind those appointments, hiding behind the defence that he did not have a choice to act otherwise. Scratch (2006) explains that Brian Mulroney, leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, fired back in the televised debate, declaring, “you had an option, sir. You could have said, ‘I’m not going to do that, it’s wrong for Canada’” (3). Members of the public sided with Mulroney and the Progressive Conservative Party, who later claimed the largest majority win in Canadian electoral history (3).

The Mulroney administration assumed office intending to fix the appointments process by taking steps to limit future abuses of the prime minister’s discretion. Under the new public management framework, the government tried to restore democratic accountability in the public



sector (Brock & Shepherd, 2018, p.12). They created the McGrath Committee, which set out some principles that guided parliament and its expected role in the selection process (Averill et al., 2004, p.13). The reforms required the government to nominate the best possible person, help the public see appointments as more than political patronage, and develop sets of criteria to scrutinize GIC appointments (Averill et al.; Scratch, 2006; Brock & Shepard, 2018). The public generally commended the Mulroney government for its desire to depoliticize and screen appointments. However, the problem with the committee was that it could only advise the government through reports submitted to the House of Commons, rather than veto a nomination or appointment it found to be suspicious or problematic (Scratch, 2006, p.4). This reality silenced whistleblowers, prompting the Auditor General of Canada to recommend reform measures that identified people's skill sets and matched them to openings going forward (Averill et al. 2004, p.1).

In 1999, the Privy Council Office created a guidebook to provide clarity to those involved in the appointments process. The report explained that each agency head must consult with the responsible minister about its needs and vacancies. Their job was to identify and recommend the names of qualified people to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) who formalized the appointments (Scratch, 2006, p.5). The government also had to post vacancies publicly. The change required the Director of Appointments in the PMO and the responsible minister to announce openings in the Canada Gazette, newspapers, and specialized magazines to ensure a highly competitive process, and the identification of the best possible person (Averill et al., 2004, p.10). Members of the public applauded the change as a step toward a merit-based promotion system. However, issues of agency directors lobbying the PMO to appoint their friends to high-level GIC positions limited the effectiveness of this initiative.

During Paul Martin's bid for leadership of the Liberal party in 2002, he declared that Canada faced a democratic deficit during a speech at Osgoode Hall Law School. His speech was critical of former governments and their inability to address blatant political interference in the face of an established merit-based system. He also criticized the notion that to get things done in Ottawa, it mattered, 'who you know in the PMO' because of the undemocratic nature of this strategy (Scratch, 2006, p.5). Instead, he wanted to create a system that encouraged ministers to engage in meaningful discussions and actively debate their case in favour of or against potential appointees. After becoming prime minister in December 2003, Martin argued that standing committees must be able to review the qualifications of GIC nominees to ensure that their skill set filled an organizational void before being appointed (Averill et al., 2004; Scratch, 2006). Martin also wanted to pre-screen the people appointed to management positions within Crown corporations or federal agencies by subjecting them to parliamentary review (Scratch, 2006, p.5). These changes gave the government the momentum it needed to maintain a democratic and merit-based appointment system. Despite the rhetoric and attempts at reform, Prime Minister Martin, himself, broke multiple rules by ignoring the standing committee's recommendation to not appoint Glen Murray as head of the National Round Table on the Sustainable Development of the Environment and Economy. The committee ruled that Mr. Murray was unfit for the position not because of his qualifications, but instead because of his ties to the PM and Liberal party (9).

During a Liberal policy convention before the 2006 federal election, Martin addressed party supporters about the importance of defending Canadian and liberal values going forward. In response, Stephen Harper, leader of the Conservative Party of Canada, replied, "corruption is not a Canadian value" regarding prior appointments of the PM's 'buddies' (Krauss, 2005). The 2006 election campaign had government accountability as its main theme. The Harper-led

Conservatives were poised to set a new standard of excellence to avoid the mistakes of previous governments, especially in response to the revelations of the Gomery Inquiry, which found multiple instances of the previous Liberal government involved in numerous scandals. The Conservatives promised to create a policy to base every appointment on merit to identify the best possible people without political influence or individual favouritism (“Selection and Appointment,” 2016). The new criteria required candidates to have specific qualifications in terms of education and experience to fill the organization’s needs and emphasized that the appointment could take effect only after all the conditions were satisfied. Harper made the appointments of Indigenous and disabled peoples to high-level GIC jobs a priority. He also attempted to prioritize veterans who were qualified for certain positions ahead of other candidates (“Selection and Appointment,” 2016). The reforms tried to address some of the previous government’s (and those before it) issues related to equity and diversity, but challenges regarding selections based on merit continued.

From 2006 to 2011, the minority Harper governments rewarded hundreds of donors and party members with well-paid positions across the federal government. During his first term, Harper made at least 386 patronage appointments, hand-picking some well-known party supporters (November 28th, 2008 to August 10th, 2010) to fill various agencies, boards, commissions, Crown corporations, tribunals, and the Senate with friends of the government (Liberal Party, 2010). The optics of this decision were bad considering Harper’s public criticism of Martin and other governments for appointing their ‘buddies’ to major GIC posts. These appointments were formalized by the Governor-General acting on the advice of cabinet and include almost all positions within the 204 federal organizations (“Governor in Council appointments,” 2019).

The Conservatives also used patronage appointments in their third term by continuing to provide opportunities to party supporters. Zimonjic (2016) explained that during his final days as PM, Harper made 33 reappointments which included the president of Canada Post, executive director of Telefilm Canada, members of the Immigration and Refugee Board, Veteran's Ombudsman, Payments in Lieu of Taxes Dispute Advisory Panel, and Via Rail. This decision prevented the incoming government from appointing their preferred candidates to some important positions because of the conditions the Harper government placed on their removal, which sparked demand for reform of the whole process.

In 2015, the Liberal party won a majority government. Part of their platform included a plan to change the appointments system. They created a 'new approach' focused on openness, transparency, and diversity, backed by a policy commitment to appoint people based on merit free from political influence ("Appointment Policy," 2019). Justin Trudeau reiterated his party's dedication to improving transparency in the public service. He claimed, "the government must serve the public interest and remain accountable to Canadians" when addressing what many believed to be a broken appointment system (Zimonjic, 2016). The Liberal government tried to restore the public's faith in merit-based appointments by creating new measures to get it right. They saw value in past reforms and tried to include the things that should have worked well in its strategy, creating optimism that the Liberal party could fix the appointments process after nearly a century of hollow promises.

The Liberals expected to establish a non-partisan and diverse workforce that thrived on a culture designed to welcome all people regardless of their background ("Appointment Policy," 2019). They also discussed the importance of fair selection processes to identify competent people who fit each organization's needs. Changes also occurred to the way the positions were advertised

by listing appointment opportunities on the Government of Canada's website, name of a contact person, and the merit criteria ("Appointment Policy," 2019). The reforms required agency heads to consider people of priority entitlement, which included all people deemed surplus, on leave, or laid off from the public service. Former Canadian Armed Forces or RCMP members released from duty for medical reasons were also ranked ahead of other equally qualified candidates ("Appointment Policy," 2019). The new policy also expanded upon the selection criteria laid out by the Harper government to consider different personal attributes, skills, abilities, and language proficiency, along with education and professional experience ("Appointment Policy," 2019). Specifically, the Liberals stressed the importance of being fluent in both English and French and used videoconferencing to test a person's ability to speak both languages well. Lastly, the policy encouraged the Public Service Commission (PSC) to monitor people's compliance with the new rules by conducting regular audits or surveys of federal organizations ("Appointment Policy," 2019). The new changes spark the question, have the Liberal reforms changed the quality and type of people appointed to federal organizations?

#### *Patronage and Partisan Advisers*

Recent scholarly work has discovered that patronage appointments have created a process that staff many federal agencies with partisan advisors. These advisors exist because of a system that encourages appointees to give policy advice and conduct analysis through a partisan-political lens (Craft, 2017, p.330). Savoie (2013) notes that in Ottawa, the mantra continues to be, "on policy, you stand where you sit" (20). The problem with this arrangement is that government officials continually accept information that supports their position, rather than considering various perspectives on an issue (Pal, 2011, p.334). For example, one advisor admitted to ordering some recommendations to be removed because it would 'just anger the minister' (Wilson, 2016, p.349). This concern is not only symptomatic of an undemocratic system but also one where many political

officials exploit loopholes in federal legislation to justify their power. Maley (2017) explains that after appointing federal ministers, the PM labels them as ‘exempt staff’ under the Public Service Employment Act 2003 (PESA), meaning that they do not need to be selected on merit or act in a non-partisan manner (409).

A deeper dive into how the legislation (PESA) empowers political appointees is useful to show why the selection process is controversial. Under this framework, ministerial appointments can be partisan because the merit principle does not apply. As a result, ministers who oversee federal ABCs can staff various organizations with partisan supporters because if all else is equal, they are likely to appoint a person willing to support their position compared to one who is not. Wilson (2016) discovered that in November 2015, the Privy Council Office (PCO) added a code of conduct for all exempt staff to PM Trudeau’s guide for ministers (353). The change required that staffers do not deceive or knowingly mislead Parliament, Ministers, public servants, investigator bodies, and the public (Wilson, 2016, p.353). However, it is hard to estimate the value of this change because the extent to which partisan advisors impact the government is not fully known. This problem does, however, imply that a partisan breakdown has occurred, meaning that former governments have passed legislation to manipulate a democratic process to provide it with an advantage going forward (Pal, 2011, p.333). Most notably, the Liberals used a partisan database to conduct background checks on candidates for almost all GIC appointments and even encouraged some people to apply for positions (Brock & Shepherd, 2018, p.7).

Canada’s problem with appointments has also divided people’s views of political patronage. Current research shows that there is far from a scholarly consensus about whether patronage is entirely good or bad for democracy. This grey area has allowed researchers to make a compelling case for or against the tactics used in Canada. Some argue that patronage is evil and

poses a threat to Canadian democracy (Pond, 2008; Bearfield, 2009; Anand, & Sossin, 2018). Others consider patronage appointments to be destructive because it produces staffing policies that result in marginally qualified people, waste, and inefficiency (Bearfield, 2009, p.67). This issue is related to the appointments of party supporters to high-level GIC positions who lack the skills to do a job well or designate resources properly. The idea here is that partisan interests corrupt any system where the prime minister has full control over appointments (Pond, 2008, p.63). This reality has prompted many experts to suggest that patronage is the least effective strategy for staffing federal organizations (Aucoin & Goodyear-Grant 2002; Pond, 2008; Bearfield, 2009; Hodder, 2015).

Aucoin and Goodyear-Grant (2002) recognize that ABC governance will always be political, in that elected governments attempt to guarantee that the people they appoint follow their plan and embrace their values. However, those against patronage appointments argue that it places people who are not representative of Canada's regional, cultural, and ethnic diversity into big jobs across the federal government (Pond, 2008, p.53). The PM's decision to handpick people from an exclusive network is problematic and contradicts efforts to increase equity and celebrate differences within the public sector. Also, research against patronage mentions the importance of maintaining accountability across the federal government. Hodder (2015) explains that some leaders are motivated to give power to like-minded people who are willing to advance their agenda rather than do what is best for the public. The possible implications for Canada are that the people appointed to federal ABCs, Crown corporations, and tribunals fail to serve the public's best interest. These ideas give support to the group claiming that patronage appointments are a step backward for a government committed to a merit-based system.

Despite others' criticism of patronage appointments, many scholars argue that it is a valuable resource for government officials to maximize (Flinders & Matthews, 2010; Flinders, 2012; Durose, Justice, Skelcher, 2015; Ryu, Chang, 2017). For example, it can be a means of establishing, funding, and controlling federal organizations, causing some people to believe that the concept has many democratic components (Hodder, 2015, p.166). Another belief is that patronage appointments increase the efficiency of the public sector because it locks-in the support of appointees through a mutual obligation to get work done (Flinders, 2012; Durose et al. 2015; Brock & Shepherd, 2018). New research has also found that patronage appointments help create a more inviting work culture. Ryu and Chang (2017) found that career public officials are more cooperative when the appointees in their departments are committed to similar political ideas and policy agendas (483). Flinders and Matthews (2010) explain how misconceptions about appointees being corrupt, untrustworthy, and selfish have negatively influenced people's opinions of patronage. Their research tries to show that the appointments process is nowhere near as undemocratic as some academics have conveyed. They also dismiss the claims that 'falsely accuse' patronage appointments as being corrupt (Flinders & Matthews, 2010). Instead, they argue that patronage improves democratic processes because it creates a space for active discussion between the government and the people it appointed to federal organizations (Flinders and Matthews, 2010, p.653).

There is some new research that attempts to differentiate between good and bad forms of patronage. Flinders (2012) explains that most people do not understand how patronage plays a positive or critical role in democratic governance (268). Recent studies have assessed the differences between open and closed forms of patronage (Flinders, 2012; Brock & Shepherd, 2018). Brock and Shepherd (2018) explain that Canada is often accused of corrupt, secretive, or



partisan appointments, supporting the closed patronage narrative (4). However, those in favour of open patronage understand its value to society, as it remains a critical resource for all political parties (Flinders, 2012; Brock & Shepherd, 2018). “A key feature of open patronage systems is a respect for the expertise, experience, and judgement of appointees who aim to serve the public good” (Brock & Shepherd, 2018, p.30). Under this model, governments follow an open and transparent process to avoid a return to a closed system that emphasizes favour over effective governance (Brock & Shepherd, 2018, p.5). If the Canadian government does resort to patronage, it must follow the open method to improve democratic governance and the quality of appointments. However, studies assessing the quality of individual appointees to federal ABCs, especially in the Canadian context, are lacking, and this research fills that gap.

## **Methodology**

To compare the quality and type of GIC appointments to federal organizations, appointees were assessed by the following criteria: geographic location, educational background, occupation, and gender. Averill et al. (2004) defines a GIC appointment as the nomination of a competent candidate by the Privy Council Office that was officially approved based on the prime minister’s discretion (9). The scope of this comparison focuses on the 204 federal agencies, boards, commissions (ABCs), Crown corporations, and tribunals because these organizations serve advisory, operational, or regulatory purposes concerning day-to-day activities (MacDonald, 1993, p.349). I excluded ministerial, judicial, or other appointments for two reasons. First, the PM does not have to appoint ministers based on merit because of an exempt clause in PESA. Other exemptions to the GIC appointments classifications include Lieutenant-Governors, Senators, Parliamentary Secretaries, Deputy Ministers, Heads of Mission, Territorial Commissioners, Ministerial Advisors, provincial administrators, RCMP commissioners, Commanding officers, and

Commissioners of Oath (Brock & Shepard, 2018, p.12). Second, these people's power, decision-making capacity, and jurisdiction are more extensive compared to most members of an ABC.

The comparison began by collecting the data and biographical information for GIC appointments made by both governments. The timeline selected for the Conservative party was its final term in office from May 3rd, 2011 to November 3rd, 2015, which also was its majority government. After submitting a request to Library and Archives Canada regarding Harper appointments made during this time, I received archived editions of the Canada Gazette. I examined 235 weekly releases of the Gazette (May 3rd, 2011 to November 3rd, 2015) to obtain 1,428 first and last names of the people appointed to each of the 204 federal organizations. The time frame selected for the Liberal party extended from January 1st, 2016 to December 31st, 2019, as the new policy that is said to be more honorable, merit-based, and free from political interference officially came into effect in early 2016. The first and last names of 1,168 appointees were obtained from the Federal Appointments Index (FAI) on the Government of Canada's website.

### *Data Collection*

For the *geographic* information of Harper appointees, I reviewed archived press releases from the Government of Canada's official website within the folder labeled "backgrounders." I collected geographic data for Liberal appointees from the FAI. Both sets of information provided the city, town, or village name along with the province or territory the person lived in before their appointment. I collected *education* data through the archived press releases or the organization's website, and when possible, verified this by scanning the person's LinkedIn profile for specific information such as degree level, type, institution attended, and year of graduation. However, 13% (Conservative) and 10% (Liberal) of the education data were unavailable through reputable aggregators. I also gathered information about the appointee's *occupation* from the press release statements. If this information was not listed (in the press release), I consulted the appointee's

biographical summary on organizational websites, or, in some cases, LinkedIn. I recorded the person's most recent career before their appointment and searched their former job description, title, or field within the National Occupation Classification (NOC) 2016 database to classify. However, 9.1% of the occupation data for Liberal appointees was unavailable because of missing information about some of the people on the Parole Board of Canada and the Immigration and Refugee Board. A person's identity was determined through the use of gender-specific pronouns within the press releases, and verified by searching for the individual on LinkedIn, and the organization's website for photographic evidence or further confirmation of said identities.

### *Classification*

For *geography*, this study makes distinctions between different city sizes in Canada. As a result, I classified a metropolitan centre as a city with more than 900,000 residents. These areas in Canada include Calgary, Edmonton, Montreal, Ottawa, and Toronto. I included Vancouver in this category, given its international recognition and the high number of appointments from the city. I define a large-sized city as a population between 300,000-899,999 residents. These areas include cities like Mississauga, Hamilton, London, Halifax, Quebec City, and Winnipeg, amongst others. A mid-sized city had a population between 100,000-299,999. These areas include cities like Burnaby, Saskatoon, Longueuil, and Windsor, amongst others. I classified a region as small if the population was anywhere between 1-99,99, which includes places like Moncton, Kanata, and Victoria, for example.

The study also locates each person's *education* within a specific faculty. I used the University of Ottawa's classification structure to determine where particular departments fell. The Faculty of Arts consists of programs in music, language, history, and theology, amongst others. The Faculty of Education was composed of professional, master's, or doctorate programs in

education. The Faculty of Health Sciences consisted of nursing, nutrition, and kinesiology programs. The Faculty of Science included degrees in biology, chemistry, physics, math, and computer science, amongst several other specialized areas. The Faculty of Medicine included degrees in chiropractic, dentistry, medicine or pharmacy. The Faculty of Management consisted of business, or health administration, commerce, entrepreneurship, finance, industrial relations, management, and leadership programs. The Faculty of Social Sciences included degrees in criminology, economics, international relations, political science, public administration, psychology, sociology, and women's studies, amongst others. Lastly, the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Engineering consisted of degree programs that help students concentrate their studies within a subfield of these disciplines.

#### *Coding and Data Analysis*

For the *geographic* data, I did not code for the specific cities, towns, or villages the person lived in before one's appointment because of the number of different communities represented. Instead, I counted each time a person was from the same place within the total of the number of appointments. I added this amount and divided by the total number of appointees (for each government) to determine how frequently certain Canadian cities, towns, or villages came up within the larger group. I did, however, code for the province or territory the person lived in before their appointment and used the 2016 Census Classification codes for the ten Canadian provinces and three territories. Those codes are as follows: Newfoundland and Labrador (10), Prince Edward Island (11), Nova Scotia (12), New Brunswick (13), Quebec (24), Ontario (35), Manitoba (46), Saskatchewan (47), Alberta (48), British Columbia (59), Yukon (60), Northwest Territories (61), Nunavut (62). There were also a handful of Canadians appointed to federal organizations who currently live outside of Canada and were coded as 99 for international.

I also calculated the number of appointments on a per capita basis for each province and territory. The purpose was to show how well both governments represented Canadians from different parts of the country by the end of their term in office (2015 and 2019). First, I found the total number of appointments from each Canadian province or territory for both governments from collecting the data. Then I divided this number by its 2015 or 2019 population (depending on the government) and multiplied by 100 to determine the number of appointees per capita. The Liberals appointed 11 Canadians living in other countries, so I excluded those people from the analysis to get the most accurate result.

For *occupation*, I used the standardized codes in the NOC 2016 database to locate each person's most recent profession in one of the nine (the tenth was not applicable) employment classes. Occupations coded under the first class (0) represented an appointee with a background in senior management positions either in academia, government, business, retail, construction, transportation, natural resources, and agriculture, amongst others. People with recent work experience in the areas of business, finance, human resources, insurance, consulting, logistics, and administration were assigned a value of (1). Those with a history in natural or applied sciences, engineering, architecture, and information technology were assigned a value of (2). Professional occupations in health care like registered nurses, veterinarians, physicians, dentists, optometrists, pharmacists, dieticians, and physiotherapists were assigned a (3). I gave a value of (4) to those working within a bureaucracy, law, counselling, social science research, policy analysis, and education at various levels. Professions in art and culture like performing arts, film, broadcasting, journalism, writing, creative design, librarian or historian were assigned a (5). Category (6) consisted of people with experience in wholesale or retail sales, accommodation, food services, travel, tourism, or cleaning professions. Those who previously worked as a trade supervisor,

contractor, tradesperson, or operator of heavy equipment were assigned a (7). Category (8) was composed of people who worked in mining, oil and gas production, forestry and logging, agriculture, horticulture, and fishing.

I coded *gender* identities by assigning a value of (1) for those who identified as female, and (2) for male for each appointee. None of the boards reported appointments of non-binary persons, so I concluded that both governments did not select any people who identified as such. I also coded education data to account for multiple levels of schooling. This study examined one's highest level of completed education at the time of their appointment and only coded that degree. I assigned a value of (1) to a high school graduate; (2) for completed college (understood as community college if studied internationally) studies; (3), (4), and (5) for university bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees; and a (6) for professional degrees. The relevant fields of study for category (6) (in this analysis) consisted of people with either a Bachelor of Education or Laws (Juris Doctor) or a Doctor of Chiropractic, Dentistry, Medicine, Optometry, or Pharmacy. Once I accumulated this information, all of the education, occupation, gender, and provincial/territorial data was analyzed by adding the total number of similar codes for each variable and dividing it by the total number of appointments for each government.

## **Analysis**

### *Gender*

Gender equality is a concern for Canadian political leaders. However, achieving gender parity across the federal government has been less of a priority in the past. Kingston (2015) explains that the Harper government's position on topics about 'women' and 'gender' has shifted between attack and avoidance since they came to power in 2006. Members of the Canadian media explain, "asking Stephen Harper to debate 'women's issues' is a little like asking Sylvester the cartoon cat to debate 'Tweety Bird issues'" (Kingston, 2015, para.3). The media's portrayal of the

Harper approach to gender issues is harsh but is rooted in some truth. For example, the Conservative party removed the word ‘equality’ from the mandate of the Status of Women (reinstated after protest), a federal organization formed to increase women’s participation in the economic, social, and democratic life of Canada (Kingston, 2015, para.3). Harper also skipped the funeral of Flora MacDonald, the late Conservative MP credited with helping women excel in modern Canadian politics but did offer his condolences in a short tweet that misspelled her last name (Kingston, 2015, para.3). These types of incidents provide an early indication that gender was less of a priority for the Harper-led Conservatives.

Gender issues have been a significant talking point for the Trudeau government. After assuming office in 2015, Justin Trudeau established Canada’s first gender-balanced cabinet, appointing 15 of 31 women, compared to 12 of 39 under the Conservatives. When asked about the reasoning behind this decision, the PM responded, “because it’s 2015” (Ditchburn, 2015). The Liberals created different initiatives to give both men and women an equal say in politics. Most notably, the commitment to explore public policy issues and conduct cost-benefit analyses through a gender-based lens (Liberal Party, 2019). However, what remains unclear is whether this stance has translated to equal gender representation across federal ABCs, Crown corporations, and tribunals.

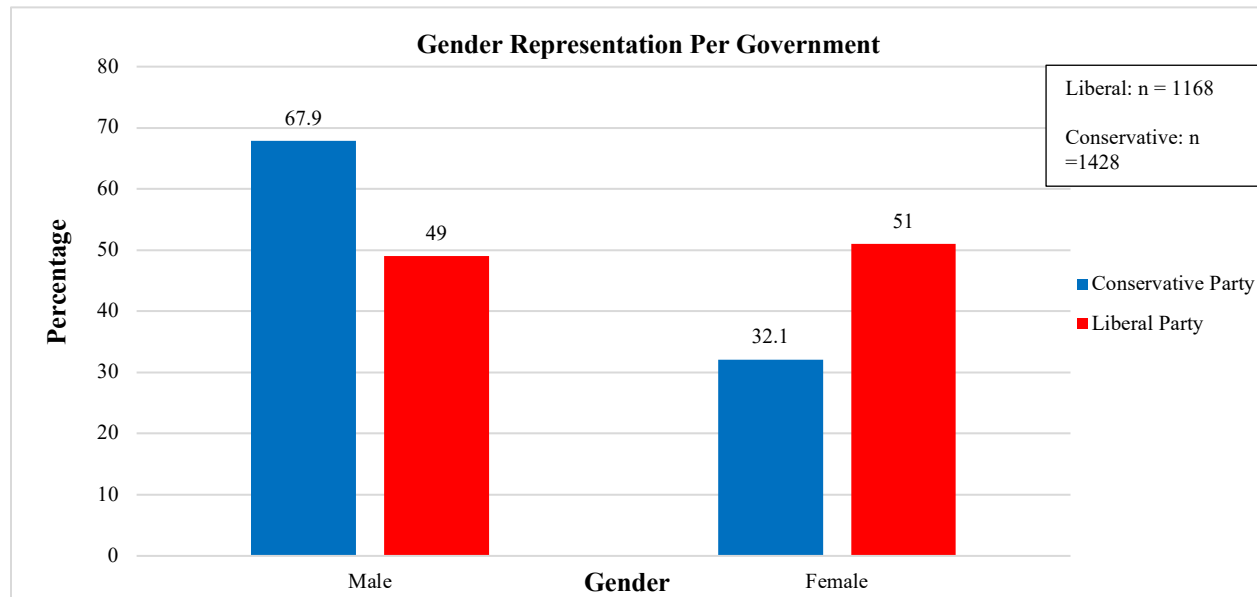
The difference in both government’s approaches to gender is an interesting point of comparison. In this case, the rhetoric appears to match reality, as ideology plays a significant role in the appointments process. From 2011-2015, Stephen Harper made 1,428 GIC appointments to roughly 200 federal organizations. Of these selections, 32.1% (459) self-identified as female, while 67.9% (969) were male. In 2011, Harper made 134 GIC appointments, and 66% were male. In the years following, the Conservatives continued to fill vacancies with men, as 71.6% (2012), 67.1%

(2013), 65.2% (2014), and 60.6% (2015) of all appointees were male. However, the number of male appointees peaked in 2012 and then steadily declined in the years following. The reason for the drop is not known, but people speculate that media scrutiny and the upcoming (2015) federal election played a part. Nevertheless, these numbers seem to reinforce the media's criticism of the Harper government and its perceived issue with gender-balance, as the male to female ratio consistently hovered around 2:1. The data also confirmed that the Harper-led Conservatives preferred a more traditional board composition by stacking federal organizations with men who fit the pale, frail, and stale mold referenced by Leblanc.

In comparison, the Liberal government made 1,168 GIC appointments from 2016-2019, with 51% (596) of appointees identifying as female and 49% (572) male. These findings are not surprising given the Liberal party's stance on gender, but it does represent a historic step for equality in Canada by appointing both men and women to high-level GIC positions. However, the percentage of male and female appointments has changed significantly from year-to-year. For example, PM Trudeau made just 54 GIC appointments in 2016, but 55% (30) were women. In 2017, the Liberals made 294 appointments, with 59% being male. The data confirmed that it took much longer than the current government expected to appoint an even number of males and females. The percentage difference in 2018 was very close, with 51% of appointees being female and 49% male (473 people). It was only in year four, however, that the Liberal party achieved a true gender balance in the 374 appointments made in 2019. The key takeaway here is that ideology does affect the type of appointments and that it took the Liberals much longer to achieve the 'real change' they built their campaign around.



**Figure 1**  
*Gender Representation: Appointments made by Harper and Trudeau*



There is also evidence to suggest that there is a link between board type and gender representation. From 2011-2015, Stephen Harper stacked many ABCs in the historically male-dominated fields of energy, finance, defence, engineering, and law enforcement with men. For example, 87% and 100% of the people appointed to the Atomic Energy of Canada Limited and Canadian Energy Regulator (National Energy Board) were male. Finance is another area where Harper had selection bias, as the Bank of Canada (74%), Business Development Bank (84%), Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation (71%), and Export Development Canada (82%) boards were predominantly male. Also, the National Capital Commission (88%), Parole Board of Canada (77%), Defence Construction (1951) Limited (86%), Natural Sciences and Engineering Council (72%), National Research Council (83%), and the Veterans Review and Appeal Board (78%) were the ABCs that appointments of men appear to be somewhat gender-aligned. Under Trudeau, the Liberals attempted to increase gender parity in every organization, but made some gendered stereotypical appointments, as well. Notably, 86% and 100% of the people appointed to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal and the Canadian Human Rights Commission were female.

Also, 73% of the appointments to the National Gallery of Canada, the nation's largest art museum, were female. The Liberal government also filled vacancies on the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council with women, who made up 82% of the board. These are only some examples, but it seems that gender representation may depend on the organization, despite a commitment to select equally and on merit.

**Table 1**  
*Board Type and Gender Appointments*

<b>Conservative Party of Canada</b>		
Board Name	Gender	Percentage
<b>Atomic Energy of Canada Limited</b>	Male	87
<b>National Energy Board</b>	Male	100
<b>Bank of Canada</b>	Male	74
<b>Business Development Bank</b>	Male	84
<b>Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation</b>	Male	71
<b>Export Development Canada</b>	Male	82
<b>Defence Construction (1951) Limited</b>	Male	88
<b>Parole Board of Canada</b>	Male	77
<b>Natural Sciences and Engineering Council</b>	Male	72
<b>National Research Council</b>	Male	83
<b>Veterans Review and Appeal Board</b>	Male	78
<b>Liberal Party of Canada</b>		
<b>Canadian Human Rights Tribunal</b>	Female	86
<b>Canadian Human Rights Commission</b>	Female	100
<b>National Gallery of Canada</b>	Female	73
<b>Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council</b>	Female	82

### *Geography*

Table 2 provides some insight into both government's geographic priorities. The data reveals that Ontario was equally important to both parties, as nearly 40% of all appointees came

from Canada's biggest province, with the Liberals holding a slight edge in total representation. Compared to the Conservatives, the Liberal government appointed more people from Saskatchewan, Yukon, and Newfoundland and Labrador. Trudeau also appointed a handful of Canadian citizens living in American, British, and Kenyan cities such as New York City, San Francisco, Brooklyn, Washington D.C., London, Cambridge, and Nairobi. Harper did not make any international appointments, but he did select more people from the Prairies (Manitoba and Alberta), Maritimes (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island), and territories (Northwest Territories and Nunavut) compared to Trudeau.

**Table 2**  
*Provincial/Territorial Appointments made by Harper and Trudeau*

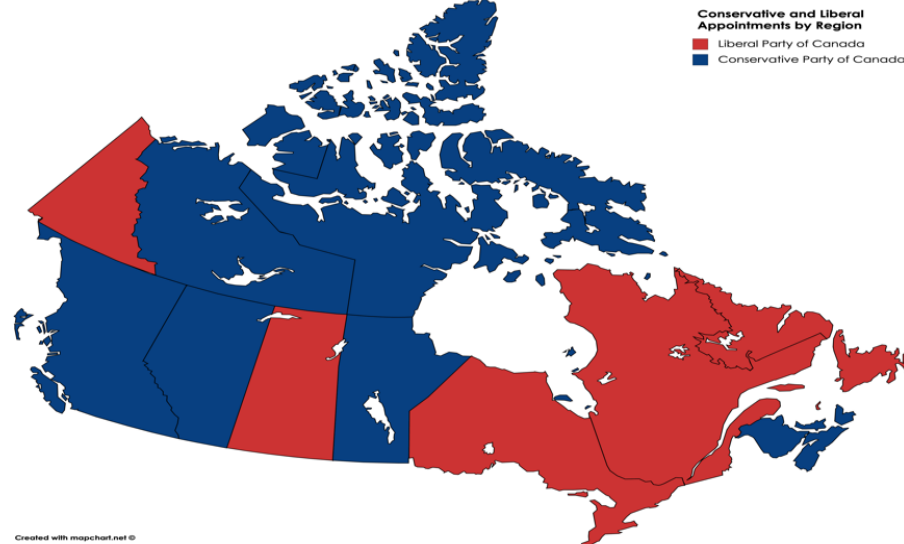
Province/Territory	Conservative Party (%)		Liberal Party (%)	
	N	%	N	%
<b>Ontario</b>	530	37.1	442	37.8
<b>Quebec</b>	257	18	244	20.9
<b>Manitoba</b>	57	4	40	3.4
<b>Nova Scotia</b>	67	4.7	51	4.4
<b>Newfoundland and Labrador</b>	44	3.1	44	3.8
<b>New Brunswick</b>	56	3.9	36	3.1
<b>Prince Edward Island</b>	24	1.7	14	1.2
<b>Saskatchewan</b>	33	2.3	34	2.9
<b>British Columbia</b>	213	14.9	146	12.5
<b>Alberta</b>	111	7.8	78	6.7
<b>Yukon</b>	5	0.4	9	0.8
<b>Nunavut</b>	9	0.6	4	0.3
<b>Northwest Territories</b>	22	1.5	15	1.3
<b>International</b>	0	0	11	0.9
<b>Total</b>	1428	100	1168	100

It is also important to highlight that both leaders made more appointments from areas to which they have a personal connection. For example, PM Trudeau appointed 244 Quebecers (20.9%) to federal organizations, which is almost three percentage points higher than that of the Harper government (18%). In other words, roughly one in every five appointees was from Quebec

under the Liberals. Harper also appointed more people from his most loyal support bases, selecting 33 more Albertans than Trudeau. The data has shown that both government's appointment numbers seem relatively similar in most provinces, but personal ties or political considerations do have an impact on representation in some areas. These differences are evident in Figure 2, which reveals the areas where both parties made more total appointments. What is apparent from this infographic is that Trudeau concentrated the majority of his appointments in Eastern Canada, while Harper seemed to prioritize the Prairies and Western Canada.

**Figure 2**

*Most Appointments by Government Broken Down by Region*



It is also useful to show a handful of appointments can impact representation on a per capita basis. The Liberals appointed 11 Canadians living in other countries, so I excluded those people from the analysis. The Conservatives appointed more people per capita in Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nunavut, and Northwest Territories compared to the Liberals. The Liberal government only appointed more people on a per capita basis in Yukon. However, both governments had comparable numbers per capita in Quebec, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland and Labrador when controlling for population

growth from the end of 2015 to 2019. Table 3 provides a full breakdown of Harper and Trudeau's appointments per capita.

**Table 3**  
Appointments Per Capita

Province	2015 Population	Number of Appointments N=1428	Conservative Party (Per Capita)	2019 Population	Number of Appointments N=1157	Liberal Party (Per Capita)
<b>Ontario</b>	13,710,000	530	0.04	14,570,000	442	0.03
<b>British Columbia</b>	4,776,000	213	0.004	5,071,000	146	0.003
<b>Quebec</b>	8,175, 000	257	0.003	8,485,000	244	0.003
<b>Alberta</b>	4,144,000	111	0.003	4,371,000	78	0.002
<b>Saskatchewan</b>	1,121,000	33	0.003	1,174,000	34	0.003
<b>Manitoba</b>	1,292,000	57	0.004	1,369,000	40	0.003
<b>Nova Scotia</b>	968,525	67	0.007	971,395	51	0.005
<b>New Brunswick</b>	758,842	56	0.007	776,827	36	0.005
<b>Prince Edward Island</b>	144,546	24	0.02	156,947	14	0.009
<b>Newfoundland and Labrador</b>	528,117	44	0.008	521,542	44	0.008
<b>Yukon</b>	37,566	5	0.01	40,854	9	0.02
<b>Nunavut</b>	36,488	9	0.02	38,780	4	0.01
<b>Northwest Territories</b>	44,237	22	0.05	44,826	15	0.03

The distribution of appointments across the different city and municipality sizes are quite similar. Under Harper, 46.8% of appointees lived in a metropolitan centre. For example, people appointed from Ottawa (11.2%), Toronto (14.2%), Vancouver (6.8%), Montreal (8.3%), Calgary (4.5%), and Edmonton (1.8%) resided in Canada's metro areas. Approximately 9.6% and 14.6% of appointees lived in a large or mid-sized Canadian city, while 29% were from small towns. Similarly, 43.5% of all Liberal appointees were from a metropolitan area, with Ottawa (13.6%),

Toronto (12%), Vancouver (4.7%), Montreal (8.6%), Calgary (2.7%), and Edmonton (1.9%) making up the total. Also, 10.4% and 13.8% of appointees lived in large or mid-sized cities, while 32% resided in small municipalities. The data confirms that the Conservatives had a slight urban bias, making more appointments from left-leaning cities like Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, and Vancouver compared to the Trudeau government. However, the Liberals seemed to place a slightly greater emphasis on appointing more Canadians from smaller towns compared to the Conservatives. These differences may have more to do with the availability of talent at the time but remains an intriguing contrast. The main takeaway, however, should be that both governments tried to appeal a bit more to areas where electoral support has been historically weak.

### *Education*

The differences in education provide an interesting point of comparison. Previously, both governments developed policies that stressed the importance of academic training. However, no prior research has assessed whether specific fields, institutions, and levels of study matter in Canada's GIC appointments process. Figure 3 attempts to compare both government's value of higher education for appointees. The caveat is that 13% and 10% of education data was not available for the Harper and Trudeau governments through reputable aggregators. As a result, these numbers exclude all of those appointees, and the figures are adjusted to consider people with a known academic background (1,236 for Harper and 1,047 for Trudeau).

The data shows that both governments appointed a similar number of people with a high school or college diploma. However, the Conservatives seemed to prioritize Canadians with a bachelor's degree. Harper appointed 373 people (30.2%) with this level of schooling, which is roughly five percentage points higher than Trudeau, who selected just 261 (24.9%). Another difference is the number of appointees with a graduate degree. The data confirmed that 36.3% of the Liberal appointees had a master's degree compared to 28.5% for the Conservatives. This trend

was consistent with the selection of Ph.D. graduates, as 14.2% of all Liberal appointees obtained a doctorate compared to 11.8% for the Conservatives. Harper did, however, select more people with a professional degree, as 320 (25.9%) of the Conservative appointees completed professional programs compared to 233 (22.3%) for Trudeau. These results demonstrate that the Conservatives selected more people with degrees that allowed them to transition into the workforce quicker than the Liberal appointees who received more formal academic training.

**Figure 3**  
*Education Levels of GIC Appointees*

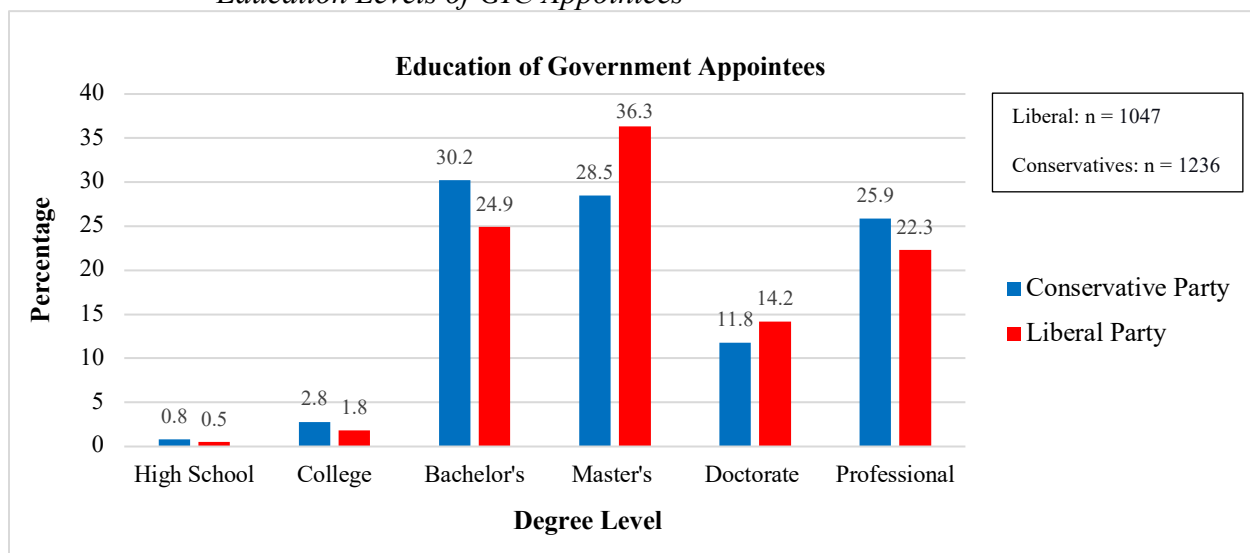


Figure 4 shows the number of appointees who graduated from different academic disciplines. I excluded all appointees with a high school diploma (unspecified learning) or unavailable education to provide the most accurate description. The percentage of people with an arts degree was the same, as the Conservatives and Liberals appointed 76 (6.1%) and 63 (6.1%) individuals with this training. The most common degrees within this discipline were music, languages, history, fine arts, divinity, and public relations. The appointments of people with a background in medicine, health sciences, and engineering were also comparable. Most of the people trained in medicine held an M.D., but others studied chiropractic, pharmacy, and dental surgery. Within the health sciences, people studied kinesiology, sports performance, and nursing.

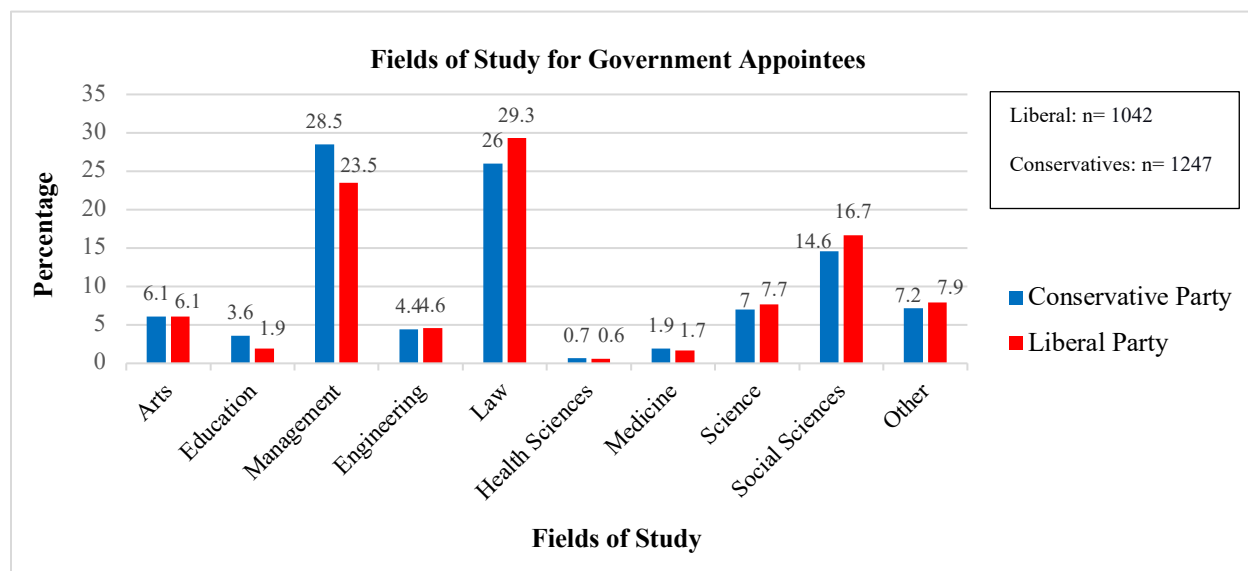
Harper and Trudeau both selected a relatively even number of people with a science background. The majority of these degrees were either in a natural or applied science like biology, computer science, chemistry, horticulture, math, or physics. Both governments appointed people from the many branches of engineering, such as civil, electrical, and mechanical. The Harper government selected more people educated in petroleum, electrical, and civil engineering, while Trudeau favoured mechanical engineers. The different governments also appointed a similar amount of people from the category other, which included trades, flight instruction, marine transportation, or any discipline not listed in Figure 4.

Education is the first field where there is a noticeable difference between the two governments. The Conservatives selected 45 (3.6%) people from this faculty compared to just 20 for the Liberals (1.9%). This finding is interesting considering PM Trudeau studied and worked in education before his political career. Harper also appointed more people from management, as he selected 356 (28.5%) individuals compared to 245 (23.5%) for Trudeau. The most common degrees in this field were commerce, leadership, human resources, and project management. Perhaps what is more interesting is both the government's value of a Master of Business Administration (MBA). Harper and Trudeau selected 143 and 111 people with this graduate business degree, meaning 40% (Harper) and 45% (Trudeau) of the management field had an MBA. The Liberals did, however, appoint more Canadians who studied law. Under Trudeau, 29.3% of all appointees had a law degree compared to 26% for Harper. Many of these people's degrees specialized in aerospace, business, criminal, human rights, international, medical, and natural resource law. Trudeau also appointed more people with a background in the social sciences compared to Harper. However, both governments selected many people with education in



criminology, economics, political science, psychology, public administration, sociology, and social work.

**Figure 4**  
*Fields of Study for Government Appointees*



These appointees studied at different schools across Canada and the world. In Eastern Canada, Harper and Trudeau appointed several people who graduated from Dalhousie, Memorial, and the University of New Brunswick. Both leaders selected people who studied at top universities in Quebec like Concordia, Laval, McGill, and Montreal. Interestingly, 93% of the Liberal appointees who attended the University of Montreal (42) obtained either a graduate or professional degree. Many appointees also graduated from Ontario universities like Carleton, McMaster, Ottawa, Queen’s, Toronto, Western, Waterloo, and York. In the Prairies, the majority of appointees studied at the University of Manitoba or Saskatchewan. The University of Calgary, Alberta, British Columbia, Victoria, and Simon Fraser were the schools that most appointees from Western Canada attended. Both governments appointed some people who graduated from elite American universities like Brown, Chicago, Columbia, Cornell, Duke, Georgetown, Harvard, Johns Hopkins, Juilliard, MIT, Northwestern, Princeton, Stanford, Yale, and UCLA. Harper and

Trudeau also selected a handful of people who studied at schools like Oxford, Cambridge, HEC Paris, Imperial College London, Nottingham, and London School of Economics and Political Science. Others studied at schools in Austria, Australia, Belgium, Germany, India, Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Lebanon, Poland, Japan, Kenya, Russia, Switzerland, and Wales.

It is also useful to show how the education requirement (degree level and field of study) in the merit criteria is dependent on the type of board. For example, all of Conservative appointees to the Canadian Human Rights Commission (5 members) and Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (17 members) had law degrees. Harper appointed people trained in business and economics, as well (83%) (20 members) to the Business Development Bank of Canada. The type of degree also mattered for the Liberal government, as 63% of all appointees to the Immigration and Refugee Board (139 members) had a law degree. Similarly, 70% of the people appointed to the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (13 members) studied history. There is also a clear link between the board and the education level of its members. For example, all of Harper's appointees to the Competition Tribunal (7 members) had either a Ph.D. in economics or a law degree. Also, all members of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (22 members) had a master's degree or higher. PM Trudeau appeared to follow this trend, as 83% of the Canadian Institute of Health Research (17 members) had a doctorate, while 91% of the National Research Council of Canada had at least a master's degree. The Liberals appointed several industry experts to the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (18 members), as 95% had a doctorate. These findings demonstrate that the merit criteria changes depending on the board, as education plays a pivotal role in defining eligibility.

### *Occupation*

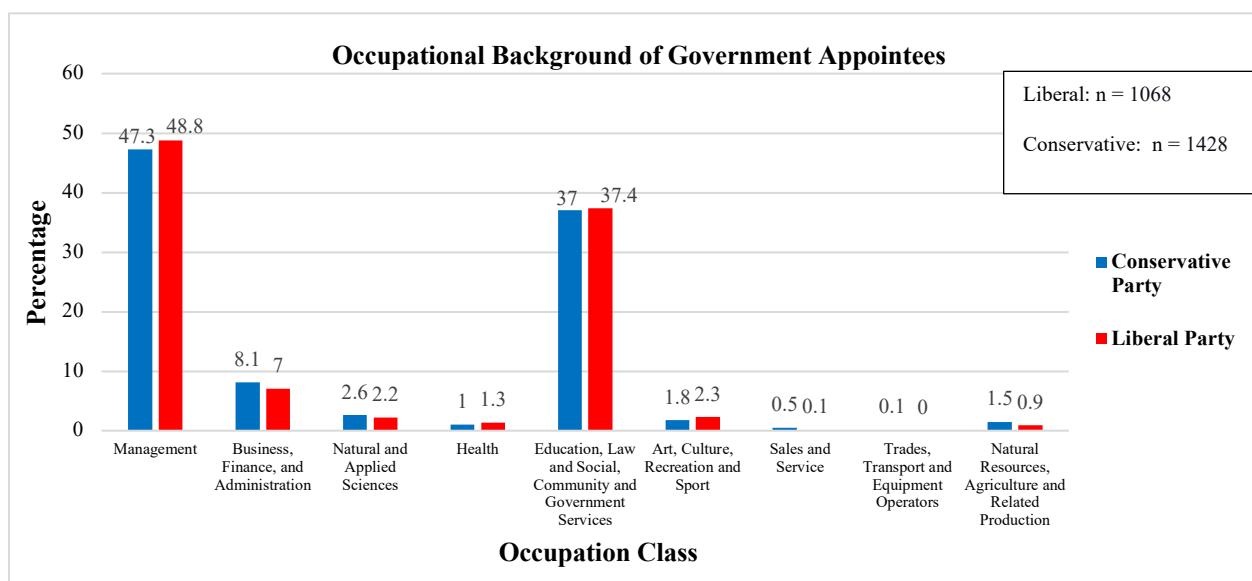
The occupational backgrounds of Liberal and Conservative appointees are noteworthy. Figure 6 displays both of the government's value of different career fields in the appointments

process. The caveat is that 9.1% of the data was unavailable for the Liberals. As a result, the numbers do not include 100 Liberal appointees (1068) to get the most accurate result possible. The data confirmed that both governments appointed a similar number of people who worked in skilled trades and sales. The amount of health care professionals appointed to federal ABCs was close, as well. However, the Liberals appointed the most medical doctors, paramedics, and pharmacists, while the Conservatives selected more nurses and dentists. Harper and Trudeau also appointed many Canadians whose profession fell within the category of law, education, social, and government services. The Conservatives selected 529 people from this category, with 16.3% (86 people) working in academia as professors, and 41.3% (219 people) actively practicing law. However, the Liberals appointed more professors, choosing 97 people (24.3%) from academia, but fewer practicing lawyers (34.4%) relative to the Conservatives. What is interesting in this section is that both governments did not select very many educators, as just 1.5% (8 people) and 1.3% of the Conservative and Liberal appointees taught in elementary or secondary schools. The data also shows that both parties appointed a similar number of people working in management positions. The professions are quite diverse, but many held the titles of commander, commissioner, deputy minister, dean or chancellor, president, CAO, CEO, director, executive director, member of parliament, vice-president, or warden.

The Liberals appointed more people from art and culture professions, but all of the appointees from this field had similar jobs (for both governments). These types of careers included artists, historians, librarians, radio hosts, and writers. The least surprising difference is that the Conservatives appointed more people with a background in natural resources. Harper selected 22 people (1.5%) from this field compared to 10 (0.9%) for Trudeau, which makes sense given that the Conservatives typically appeal to Albertans and appointed more people from the province.

Under Harper, the Conservatives appointed more people from business, finance, and administration professions. Of the 116 appointments from this category, 36.2% worked as chartered accountants compared to 20% for the Liberals. However, Trudeau selected more business consultants than Harper. Interestingly, both governments appointed people who worked in high-level positions at multinational companies like the Boston Consulting Group, Ernst and Young, Deloitte, PWC, and KPMG. Harper also appointed more people from the natural and applied sciences, selecting 37 (2.6%) compared to 23 (2.2%) for the Liberals. Nevertheless, Trudeau (34%) appointed more engineers than Harper (27%), who prioritized architects, aviators, biologists, and environmental scientists. The takeaway here is that political agendas have a minor effect on the types of appointments, as they remain fundamentally similar at its core.

**Figure 5**  
*Occupation of Appointees*



## Discussion

The Liberal reforms attempted to improve the quality of appointments to federal ABCs. The research confirmed that the changes did not enhance the quality of appointees compared to the Conservatives. Instead, the reforms created some minor changes to the types of

appointments, which were motivated by Justin Trudeau's political agenda. Most notably, the Liberal's established a gender balance, while the Conservatives appointed more men than women. Interestingly, the Trudeau government made fewer appointments from left-leaning cities and slightly more from smaller municipalities compared to Harper. However, the Liberal's appointed more people from Eastern Canada (Ontario and Quebec), while the Conservatives prioritized the Prairies and Western Canada. Trudeau also appointed more Canadians with a master's or doctorate, but Harper selected more people with a high school or college diploma and a bachelor's or professional degree. Trudeau appointed more law and social science graduates compared to Harper, who selected more people with management and education degrees. Lastly, the Liberal's appointed more Canadians from arts and culture professions, while the Conservatives chose more people who worked in natural resources. Beyond these notable differences, the 'real change' Justin Trudeau promised during his 2015 election campaign did not improve the quality of appointments to federal ABCs. Instead, I find that the reforms had a negligible impact on the types of appointees, as Trudeau shook up the appointments system to support his priorities and distinguish himself from Harper.

The research does, however, imply that Canada is in a period of transitional change. Leblanc discusses that boards must become more diverse to ensure they can serve the public and operate well. Under Trudeau, the Liberal party improved gender parity by appointing more women to boards. Both governments also selected many Canadians with expertise in several different areas to provide unique perspectives on public policy issues. Many organizations have also established substantial merit criteria to help the selection committees screen and develop short-lists of the best candidates. These changes show that the Canadian government has taken positive steps in terms of how it approaches board composition, corporate governance, and the quality of appointments.

This research also finds that the appointment system remains stuck in a transitional stage between open (OP) and closed (CP) forms of patronage. The Liberal reforms have convinced some Canadians that the government has moved past corrupt, secretive, or partisan appointments (Flinders, 2012; Brock & Shepherd, 2018). On paper, the new changes resemble an active OP model, which encourages transparency, and respect for the expertise, experience, and judgement of appointees (Flinders, 2012; Brock & Shepherd, 2018). However, the federal public service remains staffed with partisan advisers and appointees who often tell their overheads ‘what they want to hear.’ Savoie (2013) summarizes this well by asking, “do you want to understand what drives politicians? All you need to know is that they want to get re-elected” (24). Justin Trudeau made some admirable commitments to improve the quality of appointments, but the changes did not produce better appointees. For this to occur, the current Liberal government must ensure that they move past the CP model, which emphasises favour over good governance (Brock & Shepherd, 2018, p.5). With another term in office, however, the Liberals can make good on their promise to appoint the best and brightest Canadians regardless of their political stripe. Until this happens, though, one can expect lots of talk about change but much less action to improve the overall quality of federal appointees.

This paper gives some insight into current and future processes of citizen participation in Canada. The analysis makes a significant contribution to the literature and one’s understanding of Canada’s appointments process to various agencies, boards, commissions, Crown corporations, and tribunals. Prior research has focused almost exclusively on partisanship, democratic governance issues, and deferring decision-making responsibilities to members of ABCs. However, studies that thoroughly assess the quality of individual appointees to federal agencies are lacking, and this research helps bridge that gap. This research could be applied more generally by

recognizing that the quality of appointees can improve when the leader is not married to a particular profile or idea. Ultimately, the findings should be valuable to all Canadians, as federal appointees have the power to make decisions that affect their everyday lives.

### **Limitations**

This paper focuses only on GIC appointments to federal ABCs, Crown corporations, and tribunals made by the Harper and Trudeau governments. It does not consider either government's choices of ministers or members of the Senate, which are often partisan. These appointments are beyond the scope of this project, but future studies about these appointees should become part of a paper series on Canada's appointments process. Another limitation of this study is the constraint of time. Library and Archives Canada provided information to compare the quality and type of appointments from 1998 to the present day. As a result, the analysis could have also compared the Chrétien and Martin governments. Nevertheless, four months was not enough time to collect, breakdown, and analyze four government's (five terms) GIC appointments. The availability of raw data and a method to compare, however, is something that future research can build off. Lastly, this study is somewhat limited by some missing education and occupation data for both governments. I was unable to find 13% of education data for the Conservative government, while 10% (education), and 9.1% (occupation) of information for the Liberals was not available. One of the issues with collecting this information is that the government publishes people's legal names, but these people often go by an abbreviated name on the organization's website or platforms like LinkedIn. The other problem is that the Liberal government did not release sufficient background information about the people appointed to the Parole Board of Canada or the Immigration and Refugee Board. The availability of data for these specific boards is something that could improve an updated version of this study or future research on the topic.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has shown that the Liberal reforms to the appointments system are ideological and hardly different from past governments. However, the only real differences between the governments were Trudeau's value of gender equality and graduate-level education. The Liberal party vowed to address some of the former government's issues with equity and diversity. Ironically, it is possible to argue that Trudeau's appointments are more elitist, as they selected more people from positions of power, academia, or people with a graduate degree compared to Harper. I am not claiming that this is not important, but the so-called 'reforms' have not improved the quality of appointments compared to past governments. At its core, Harper and Trudeau selected people from similar professions, geographic areas, and academic backgrounds, which confirmed that the changes were motivated by the latter's political agenda.



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