

Canadian Public Administration publique du Canada

*Analyzing national, provincial, territorial, municipal, aboriginal
and international governance practice in a changing world*

*Analyse la pratique de la gouvernance nationale, provinciale, territoriale,
municipale, autochtone et internationale dans un monde en évolution*

ORIGINAL ARTICLES / ARTICLES ORIGINAUX

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Sexual Orientation & Perceptions of Public Employment
Ethnic and Linguistic Representation in the
Public Services of Belgium and Canada
Metagovernance of Canadian Urban Governance Networks
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Perspectives on Canada's Health Care System

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Canada

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Canadian Public Administration Administration publique du Canada

December/décembre 2013
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Women's ministerial careers in cabinet, 1921–2010: A look at socio-demographic traits and career experiences

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Women have long been under-represented in Canadian cabinets as a proportion of the population, although progress has been made. What does recent research reveal about the patterns in the proportion and type of portfolios held by women in federal and provincial cabinets? Have these patterns been changing?

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Les gouvernements ont cherché à renouveler et à diversifier les effectifs de leur fonction publique, mais quels sont les points de vue des groupes de relève sur l'emploi dans la fonction publique? Cette étude met l'accent sur un groupe, en tirant parti de données de sondages pour étudier les perceptions et les motivations des gais, lesbiennes, bisexuels, transgenres et queer (GLBTQ) dans les collèges et universités, au sujet de l'emploi dans le secteur public et le secteur à but non lucratif.

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Les défenseurs de la démocratie délibérative réclament depuis longtemps la participation des citoyens aux principales décisions gouvernementales, mais comment les dirigeants politiques et les citoyens peuvent-ils être assurés que les processus délibératifs représentent effectivement l'opinion publique? Cet article étudie comment la ville d'Edmonton a répondu à cette question grâce à son processus de Groupe de citoyens sur les priorités budgétaires.

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Grâce aux progrès dans la technologie de l'information, de plus en plus de travail dans la fonction publique peut être entrepris en dehors des bureaux gouvernementaux, mais les gestionnaires parviennent-ils à contrôler aussi bien le rendement des télétravailleurs que celui des non télétravailleurs? Cette étude analyse les données du *US 2011 Federal Viewpoint Survey* (sondage de 2011 sur le point de vue des employés du gouvernement fédéral américain) sur les perceptions des télétravailleurs et des non télétravailleurs de l'agence *Internal Revenue Service*.

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Manon Tremblay
Daniel Stockemer

Women's ministerial careers in cabinet, 1921–2010: A look at socio-demographic traits and career experiences

Abstract: This article probes two aspects of women's ministerial careers in federal, provincial, and territorial cabinets from 1921 to December 2010. First, we examine whether the socio-demographic profile of women ministers differ from female legislators of the governing party. Logistic regression analysis shows that women holding cabinet portfolios differ from female legislators with no ministerial responsibilities with respect to education, parliamentary experience, and age when first elected. Women legislators elected in Quebec, and more so at the federal level, were less likely to become ministers than women legislators nominated in other provinces. Second, we consider what portfolios women had over time, and how many different portfolios they were assigned to. The results are sobering: women ministers are still largely concentrated in socio-cultural and socio-economic portfolios, and most only occupy one or two of these portfolios. We conclude by identifying avenues for further research.

Sommaire : Cet article explore deux aspects des carrières ministérielles des femmes aux cabinets fédéraux, provinciaux et territoriaux entre 1921 et décembre 2010. Tout d'abord, nous cherchons à voir si le profil sociodémographique des ministres femmes est différent de celui des législatrices du parti au pouvoir. L'analyse de régression logistique démontre que les femmes ayant la charge d'un portefeuille ministériel diffèrent des législatrices sans responsabilités ministérielles en ce qui concerne l'éducation, l'expérience parlementaire et l'âge auquel elles ont été tout d'abord élues. Les femmes législatrices élues au Québec, et plus encore au palier fédéral, étaient moins susceptibles de devenir ministres que les législatrices nommées dans d'autres provinces. Ensuite, nous étudions de quels portefeuilles les femmes ont eu la responsabilité au fil des ans, et combien de différents portefeuilles leur ont été assignés. Les résultats donnent à réfléchir : les ministres femmes gèrent encore essentiellement des portefeuilles socioculturels et socio-économiques, et la plupart ne gèrent qu'un ou deux de ces portefeuilles. En conclusion, nous identifions des possibilités pour une recherche plus poussée.

Manon Tremblay is a professor in the School of Political Studies at the University of Ottawa. Daniel Stockemer is an assistant professor at the School of Political Studies at the University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ontario. They would like to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for funding which made this article possible.

Introduction

The subject of women's participation in political life in Canada has generated a considerable amount of research, particularly since the mid-1990s. In particular, female legislators have been the focus of much of this research, to the neglect of women elected in municipal politics, or those appointed as ministers and senators. In regard to the study of women cabinet ministers, two articles written by Donley T. Studlar and Gary F. Moncrief (1997, 1999) remain authoritative. Of course, other works pertaining to female ministers in Canada have been published since, but their scope is limited in time and space. No studies cover the entire span of women's ministerial careers in Canadian cabinets at all levels of government (that is, federal, provincial, and territorial) from the initial appointment of women ministers in 1921 to the present. This article addresses this gap in the literature on legislative politics in Canada.

The purpose of this study is to analyze selected aspects of women's ministerial careers in Canadian cabinets from 1921 to December 2010. We do recognize that the ideal scenario would have been to compare women's and men's ministerial careers in the federal government, provinces and territories from 1921 to 2010. We simply do not have resources, however, to build a database of all women and men cabinet ministers and legislators at the federal, provincial and territorial levels since the 1920s. For this reason, we follow Studlar and Moncrief (1997, 1999) and limit our research to women's ministerial careers only. This shortage of data certainly limits the scope of the analysis because it prevents the evaluation of women's ministerial careers in light of men's cabinet experiences. That being said, this research provides a wealth of new information on the entire population of women cabinet ministers in Canada between 1921 and December 2010 which, in itself, is worthwhile. Most importantly, we compare and contrast the socio-demographic traits of women ministers to those female members of the governing party who have not held a ministerial portfolio. Second, we examine women's ministerial careers over time. More specifically, we evaluate whether the presence of women across portfolios has been more evenly distributed in recent times than in early years. In addition, we examine whether today women hold different types of portfolios during their career than they did in past decades.

This article proceeds as follows. The next section offers some background information on the development of female ministerial careers in Canada over nearly the past 100 years. Second, we review the relevant literature on women in Canadian politics and present our two working hypotheses. Parts three and four describe the data and methodology

employed for our quantitative analysis. The fifth section provides the results of our analyses. We conclude with general considerations for future research on women's ministerial careers in Canada.

The evolution of women's ministerial careers from 1917 to 2010

Within the scope of ongoing work by the Canadian Democratic Audit, an assessment by White in his book, *Cabinets and First Ministers*, reads as follows: "Canadian cabinets are in the least democratic" (2005: 3). Among the reasons for this sober statement is the high concentration of power in the prime minister or premier's (hereafter first minister) hands, the opacity of cabinet decision-making processes and the weak mechanisms of accountability, as well as the demographic unrepresentativeness of cabinet appointments. This last point is perfectly highlighted in the historical underrepresentation of women in ministerial portfolios. While women were first nominated provincial ministers in 1921 (in Alberta and British Columbia), it was not until 1957 before the first woman entered the federal cabinet. Conservative Prime Minister John Diefenbaker appointed Ellen Fairclough at the junior position of secretary of State of Canada. Subsequent prime ministers followed in Mr Diefenbaker's path, nominating a single token woman in their cabinet. For example, the following liberal Prime Minister, Lester B. Pearson, appointed Judy LaMarsh to his cabinet. The dominant tenor at the time would find it acceptable to have but one woman with ministerial duties. Pauline Jewett (candidate at the 1965 federal elections) asked Prime Minister Pearson whether she could envision serving as cabinet minister if elected, to which he replied: "that while she was certainly qualified, he already had a woman in the Cabinet and he didn't think LaMarsh wanted to be replaced" (MacIvor 1996: 283). When the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada (the Bird Commission) published its report at the beginning of the 1970s, less than a handful of women had undertaken a ministerial career in Canada. Women have improved their presence in Canadian cabinets in subsequent years, though they still constitute a minority. While only 4.5% of ministers in Canada were women between 1921 to the mid-1980s, these proportions increased to 17.7% between the mid-1980s and the mid-1990s, and again to 24.4% from the mid-1990s to 2007 (Tremblay 2010).

We decode four sub-periods to highlight the extent to which women's participation in Canadian cabinets has evolved over time: 1917 to 1971, 1972 to 1983, 1984 to 1996, and 1997 to 2010. The first sub-period is marked by the election of Canada's first female legislator – a prerequisite for access by a woman to a cabinet.¹ The period ends in the year in which the report

of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada was briefly debated in the House of Commons (that is, in 1971). The Report not only stated the underrepresentation of women in Canadian politics, but emphasized the parties' role in this regard. The next period begins in 1972, at which time eight women were elected for the first time to the national legislature. By exceeding the number of women previously elected to parliament (five in 1953 and 1962), the year 1972 initiated a decade in which women became more visible, or less "incidental," in Canadian politics.² The feminist movement also became active in the 1970s, which undoubtedly influenced women's increased participation in Canadian electoral politics – a development that also took place in the United States as established by Lawless and Pearson (2008).

At present, women assuming ministerial duties are more numerous, and also because gender roles are now less restrictive than in the past, we hypothesize that (1) women's distribution among the different ministries should now be more equal than in the past and (2) women should be awarded more portfolios in various sectors now than they were previously

The years 1984 to 2010 can be further divided into two sub-periods: 1984 to 1996 and 1997 to 2010. The year 1984 marked a turning point for women's political participation in Canada (Studlar and Matland 1994). Overall, 22 women were elected between the federal Parliament and the provincial or territorial legislatures – surpassing a total 20 for the first time. Although the election of just fewer than two dozen women can hardly be considered a revolution, the results of 1984 nevertheless started a fundamental trend that continued in successive elections, giving first ministers a more diversified pool of women legislators from which to choose their ministers. In addition, the 1984 election campaign included a leaders' debate dealing exclusively with women's issues – a unique event in Canada's electoral annals. Not only did the debate help to mobilize women voters (Cohen 1993), but it put women's issues on the electoral agenda.

Aside from generating relatively balanced time periods in terms of the number of years (13 and 14, respectively) and persons (311 versus 371), the subdivision of the years 1984 to 2010 into the sub-periods of 1984–96 and 1997–2010 is also justified in terms of the number of women elected for the first time. Between 1984 and 1996, no more than 29 women were elected to a legislature, with the exception of 1993 when 58 women entered legislative politics. For the next period from 1997 to 2010, the influx of new female

legislators was more pronounced, when more than 40 women sat in Parliament or in a legislative assembly for the first time following a general federal, provincial or territorial election. The number of elected female candidates was as follows: 33 in 1999; 49 in 2003; 45 in 2007; and 46 in 2008. To summarize, the 853 women who have ever been elected to the federal Parliament, or to a provincial or territorial legislative assembly, are divided as follows: 76 between 1917 and 1971; 95 between 1972 and 1983; 311 between 1984 and 1996; and 371 between 1997 and 2010. Of particular interest, the increase of women ministers is relatively linear to the increase of women legislators.

Review of the literature and working hypotheses

Several studies have shown that Canadian politicians (mostly men) at all political levels constitute an elite, either because they have a university education or because they have held a high-level position (for example, managerial or professional) before being elected (see, among others, Docherty 2005: 26–46; Paquin 2010; Smith 2007: 96–114; Studlar et al. 2000). A sizable minority of legislators also had experience at lower levels of government (for example, local or school politics) before being first elected to the House of Commons or to a provincial or territorial legislative assembly (Barrie and Gibbins 1989; Docherty 1997: 68). Female legislators do not deviate from this elite profile. They generally have higher levels of education than women in the general population and they occupy positions at the peak of the employment structure (Black and Erickson 2000; Brodie 1977, 1985: 89; Kohn 1984; Langevin 1977: 32; Oakes 1994: 163; Tremblay and Trimble 2004; Vickers and Brodie 1981). Few female parliamentarians, however, have had experience at other levels of government before being elected to a legislature (Brodie 1985: 81–83; Kohn 1984; Oakes 1994: 173; Tremblay and Pelletier 1995: 30–31).

Some authors have shown that women legislators have increased chances of being appointed minister (Cochrane 1977: 73; Docherty 2002; Kerby 2009). Women's access to ministerial functions may be explained by the small pool of female legislators and the imperative of visibility; nowadays, it is more essential than ever to have women in cabinets (Docherty 2005: 9, 59; White 2005: 35–36). Is the imperative for visibility so strong, however, that the first minister is compelled to appoint female legislators to cabinet whose socio-demographic profile does not substantially differ from that of representatives who did not receive a ministerial promotion? ³ If male ministers in Canada form an elite compared with legislators, the same should be true for women ministers who, as a general rule, are selected from the legislators forming the government caucus. We

also expect that women with prior legislative experience have increased chances of being appointed as ministers. We therefore hypothesize that first ministers select the most educated and most qualified women among the still rather small pool of women deputies.⁴

As mentioned above, women ministers have inspired far fewer writings than female legislators. Undoubtedly, part of the explanation resides in the small number of women appointed as ministers in Canada (fewer than the number of female representatives) and the fact that their access in greater numbers to cabinets has been restricted to the past two decades. In recent years, however, more women have been appointed to cabinet. Since 1997, 163 women became ministers in Canada – almost as many as were appointed between 1921 and 1996. Yet, studies show that women's ministerial careers in cabinets are concentrated in certain portfolios associated with their private roles and the management of daily life, such as health and welfare, education and childhood, and municipal affairs (Bashevkin 1993: 88; Brodie 1977; Cochrane 1977: 73; Moncrief and Studlar 1996; Trimble and Tremblay 2005). Somewhat more nuanced, Studlar and Moncrief (1999: 379) note that although women are "still concentrated in traditional women's ministries, they have diversified the portfolios they hold." At present, women assuming ministerial duties are more numerous, and also because gender roles are now less restrictive than in the past, we hypothesize that (1) women's distribution among the different ministries should now be more equal than in the past and (2) women should be awarded more portfolios in various sectors now than they were previously.

Data

Our dataset on women's ministerial careers at all political levels (that is, federal, provincial, and territorial) of cabinet includes data for the total of women who have assumed ministerial responsibilities between 1921, when the first two women were appointed ministers in Canada, to December 2010. In other words, the present analysis covers the population of female cabinet ministers in Canada; 343 individuals who have each assumed one or more ministerial portfolios in a federal, provincial, or territorial cabinet. To this number, we add the 263 female legislators from the governmental party who did not hold the position of cabinet minister. We deliberately exclude all women deputies from opposition parties. By virtue of being in the opposition caucus, these women legislators have no opportunity of being nominated into the cabinet.⁵ For reasons mentioned above, we also exclude men. While this exclusion limits the scope of our results, it nevertheless allows us to retrace women's ministerial careers in Canada. In our analysis, we evaluate the socio-demographic and circumstantial traits

that influence women legislators' chances of gaining a cabinet portfolio. Prior to this analysis, we quickly present the theoretically informed covariates, as well as our control variables, which form the independent variables of our quantitative analysis.

Main independent variables

We have hypothesized that female ministers should be more qualified than female deputies who have not had a ministerial career in cabinet. We measure "qualifications" by several proxy variables. First, we assume that women deputies with a university education (coded 1) are more likely to enter ministerial duties than women with no university education (coded 0). Second, we include the female deputies' job type into the equation and assume that women who had an elitist or political job before taking office are more likely to gain ministerial duties than women who worked in other jobs before entering parliament.⁶ Third, we suggest that a person's political qualifications increase with legislative experience and conjecture that women parliamentarians in their second or third term have an increased likelihood of being nominated as ministers as compared with women in their first term. Analogous to the two previous variables, we code this third proxy as a dummy variable and code women with prior parliamentary experience 1 (and 0 otherwise).

Control variables

While it is the main focus of this section of the article to juxtapose the socio-demographic status of women ministers to that of women non-ministers of the government caucus, we include several personal and circumstantial control variables into the analysis. First, we add age as another personal variable and hypothesize that the earlier a woman enters parliament the more likely she is to become a minister. We operationalize the variable according to the age at which she first entered parliament. Second, we include controls for two fundamental characteristics of Canadian politics – regional differentiation and political affiliation – which should also impact the nomination of women to cabinet posts. For instance, the western provinces are at the vanguard in terms of women's political rights, whereas the Atlantic Provinces are known for their reluctance to elect women (Brodie 1977; Carbert 2002, 2009; Edwards 2008: 25–39; Moncrief and Studlar 1996; Studlar and Matland 1996; Studlar and Moncrief 1997; Vickers and Brodie 1981; for a critical perspective, see Bittner and Goodyear-Grant, 2013 and Carbert and Black 2013). To capture possible variation in the percentages of female ministers, we consider six regions: the federal government, the West, Ontario, Quebec, Atlantic Canada, and the Territories (that is, Nunavut, the Northwest Territories

and Yukon). To correctly display these six regions, we create five dummy variables using the West as the reference category.

To be sure, some portfolios with a socio-cultural or socio-economic mission involve sectors of great importance for Canadian governments (for example, education, health, the environment, and immigration)

Since political parties are key players in Canadian politics, we also add a variable controlling for women deputies' party affiliation in order to decipher whether a woman legislator's chances of becoming minister are impacted by her party family. In the equation, we differentiate between three large party families – conservative, liberal and social democratic parties. To capture these three party families, we create two dummy variables, with liberal parties serving as the reference category. Finally, we differentiate between the aforementioned time periods (1917–1971, 1972–1983, 1984–1996, and 1997–2010) to account for the time period during which a female deputy became minister. Given that some descriptive statistics indicate that the relationship between time and an increase or decrease in the number of female ministers is not linear, we also create three dummy variables for this indicator using the first time period (1917–1971) as a reference category.

Methodology

To obtain a more robust picture of the factors that determine whether a women deputy becomes a minister, we present the results of a multivariate regression model. The regression model yields 435 cases. We could not obtain data for at least one of the variables included in the regression model in 161 cases, and therefore had to exclude them from the equation. On the right-hand side of our equation is the dependent variable, women minister (coded 1 if the female deputy has held at least one ministerial position during a term and 0 otherwise). On the left hand side of the equation are our seven theoretically informed covariates. As a modeling device, we use binary logistic regression with Huber White Standard Errors (1980). The dichotomous nature of the dependent variable requires the use of this maximum likelihood estimation technique. All maximum likelihood estimations, however, have the disadvantage of expressing the coefficients in log odds. As such, the substantive impact of each independent variable on the dependent variable cannot be directly interpreted from the model. As a remedy, we use Gary King's Clarify Program to transform these log odds into probabilities. This gives us a tangible

Table 1. *Results of the regression equation*

	<i>Beta Coefficient</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>Significance Level</i>
D_Education	.649	.252	.010
D_Elitist/Political Job	.333	.255	.191
D_Elected Before	.571	.234	.015
Age	-.036	.014	.013
D_Conservative Party	.141	.236	.591
D_Social Democratic Party	.304	.332	.360
D_Atlantic Provinces	.170	.393	.666
D_Ontario	-.141	.408	.729
D_Quebec	-.942	.367	.001
D_TNO/Yukon/Nunavut	.751	.691	.225
D_Federal	-1.33	.340	.000
D_Period (1972–1983)	-.006	.474	.989
D_Period (1984–1996)	-.226	.424	.594
D_Period (1997–2010)	.043	.428	.920
Constant	1.64	.825	.047
Pseudo Rsquared	.114		
Proportional Reduction in Error	.228		
N	435		

measure of each significant independent variable's impact on the dependent variable. The equation for our regression model is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Log} (P(\text{Minister} = 1) / P(\text{No Minister} = 0)) = b_0 + b_1 \text{D_University Degree} + b_2 \text{D_Elitist/Political Job} + b_3 \text{D_Elected Before} + b_4 \text{Age} + b_5 \text{D_Conservative Parties} + b_6 \text{D_Social Democratic Parties} + b_7 \text{D_Atlantic Provinces} + b_8 \text{D_Ontario} + b_9 \text{D_Quebec} + b_{10} \text{D_TNO/Yukon/Nunavut} + b_{11} \text{D_Federal} + b_{12} \text{D_Period (1972–1983)} + b_{13} \text{D_Period (1984–1996)} + b_{14} \text{D_Period (1997–2010)} + e$$

Results

The profile of women ministers

The regression model yields some interesting results (see Table 1). For one, it improves the predictive capacity of correctly forecasting whether a woman deputy will become minister. More precisely, the Proportional Reduction in Error measure (PRE) indicates that the model decreases the

likelihood of incorrectly predicting whether or not a woman deputy will become minister by more than 20 per cent. On the other hand, the equation yields interesting results pertaining to our main hypothesis. We find that, on average, women ministers are more qualified than women non-ministers. For example, a hypothetical woman deputy aged 50 from Ontario, who was employed in an elitist job, belongs to a conservative party, has been elected to parliament for the first time after 1997 and has no parliamentary experience, has an over 14 percentage points higher chance of becoming minister if she holds a university degree as compared with a woman that does not. In other words, the probability of our hypothetical woman parliamentarian to become minister increases from 56 to 70 percent if she has a college education.

If we look at the impact of having prior parliamentary experience, we get a similar picture. Our results indicate that women legislators who have had been elected prior are approximately 12 percentage points more likely to become minister than legislators that lack this experience. More precisely, our probability transformations predict that our previously defined hypothetical woman, who lacks higher education, has a 56 percentage point chance of being nominated as minister if she has no prior parliamentary experience. The odds increase to 68 percent if she does have a prior legislative career.

This result also coincides with the current literature on the topic. In his study on the characteristics of ministerial careers in Canadian provinces from the mid-1940s to 1990, White (1998: 376) notes that only “between a quarter and a third of ministers come into office as brand new members, with absolutely no legislative experience.” Our results confirm this conjecture: we find that more than 61 per cent of women deputies that have had prior elected experience at the federal Parliament, or in a provincial or territorial legislative assembly, have become ministers. In contrast, only 39.1% (134/343) of female ministers have obtained their first ministerial portfolio during the same year in which they were initially elected to a legislature (see also Black and Erickson 2000; Lawless and Pearson 2008). Despite the fact that women in their second and third legislative terms have had better chances of being nominated for ministerial positions, the proportion of women appointed minister in the first year following their election is quite high. This finding is in line with the hypothesis that women have good chances in entering cabinets from the outset (Cochrane 1977: 73; Docherty 2002; Kerby 2009).

In contrast to education and elected experience, our third proxy variable measuring a candidate's professional background – or her employment in an elitist or political job – does not seem to impact women's chances to be appointed to any portfolio. Despite this no-effect, our findings allow us to conclude that qualifications in the form of education and parliamentary