

Representing You:

Members of Parliament on the Job

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Who Represents You?

In every federal election, Canadians select 308 Members of Parliament to serve in one of the most important jobs in Canada. They arrive in Parliament with the responsibility to govern our country. What are these people like? When did they first become interested or engaged in politics? How did they come to run for office? Did they plan and hope for years for this job? How did they feel once they got the job?

In order to answer some of these questions, Samara partnered with the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians to conduct Canada's first-ever systematic series of exit interviews with 65 former Members of Parliament (MPs). Then, based on these interviews, Samara produced a series of reports. Many organizations conduct exit

Samara is an organization that studies citizen engagement with Canadian democracy. Its projects work to strengthen the health of Canadian democracy. For more information, check www.samaracanada.com.

interviews with employees who are leaving to get their ideas on how the organization can be improved. However, no one had ever conducted exit interviews with MPs. Through these interviews, Samara learned a lot about Canada's political system from people who had spent

many years working inside it. And now that information will be used by students like you to explore what it takes to be an MP, and what these MPs said about the job.

The answers to these questions were often unexpected. This booklet discusses three particularly surprising patterns that came from the interviews.

- First, the MPs all had really different lives before they were elected.
- Second, many of the MPs said they did not plan to become politicians.
- Third, even after spending quite a lot of time as an MP, they didn't agree on what the main job of an MP was.

The MPs' answers show a range in their backgrounds, motivations and professional experiences. However, they all shared one thing: they were involved in public life before deciding to run for office. Whether through their work, their volunteering, or a combination of both, they had opportunities to meet many different people in their community. It was often these experiences — both positive and negative — that ultimately led them to become an MP.

These stories provide powerful examples of how, given the right amount of dedication, determination, and luck, anyone can become an MP.

What Makes an MP?

Many MPs had at least one experience that might be expected from someone who became politically active. For example, some said that they had parents who encouraged political debate at the dinner table. Some had university degrees in law or political science. There were a few that volunteered with a political party association, and some that worked as an aide to a politician, or had been elected at the municipal or provincial level.

However, only a very few of the MPs who were interviewed had most or all of these experiences.

With a couple of high-profile exceptions, such as Prime Minister Paul Martin whose father was an MP and a cabinet minister, most of the MPs who were interviewed were not raised on politics. The MPs grew up in households that were often hundreds or thousands of kilometres from Ottawa. Their parents worked a wide variety of jobs. Over ten percent were not born in Canada, and many more were the children of immigrants. Most didn't join a youth group of a political party. And while the majority had university degrees, most studied subjects other than political science or law.

The interviewees had a range of jobs, professions and community interests, and most didn't enter federal politics until their mid- to late-40s. While some spent portions of their careers in roles one would assume typical of a federal politician — lawyer, school board trustee, political staffer or a municipal or provincial politician — most spent approximately 20 years in jobs and activities outside of federal politics.

Over 25 percent of those interviewed were involved in education as teachers, coaches, principals or professors. An even larger number worked in business as entrepreneurs, managers, salespeople and senior executives. Others came from professions such as journalism, accounting, engineering, nursing and social work. Ten percent had some military experience, and many more worked in the public service in a variety of jobs, from a civil service manager to a police officer to an air traffic controller. Several ran non-profit organizations. Two were clergymen. One was the Grand Chief of a First Nation.

What do the different backgrounds of the MPs tell us about Canada as a country?

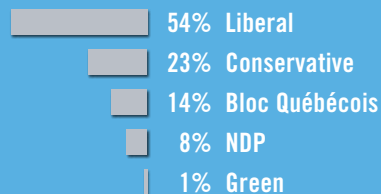
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FORMER PARLIAMENTARIANS WERE INTERVIEWED FOR THIS PROJECT. THEY LEFT PUBLIC LIFE DURING OR JUST AFTER THE 38TH AND 39TH PARLIAMENTS, WHICH SAT FROM 2004 TO 2008.

The average age at which the MPs entered federal office was 46.8 years. The median age was 48 years.
22% are female.

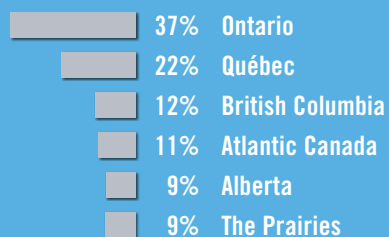
11% are immigrants.
41% represented urban ridings, 23% suburban and 36% rural or remote.

MPS' PARTY AFFILIATION AT THE TIME THEY LEFT OFFICE



This group is more heavily weighted to the Liberals than the current Parliament due to the outcome of the 2008 and 2006 elections.

REGIONS REPRESENTED BY THOSE INTERVIEWED



This mirrors almost perfectly the distribution of the Canadian population.



82% indicated English as their preferred language. 18% indicated French.

The MPs' average tenure was 10.3 years. Their median tenure was 12.3 years.

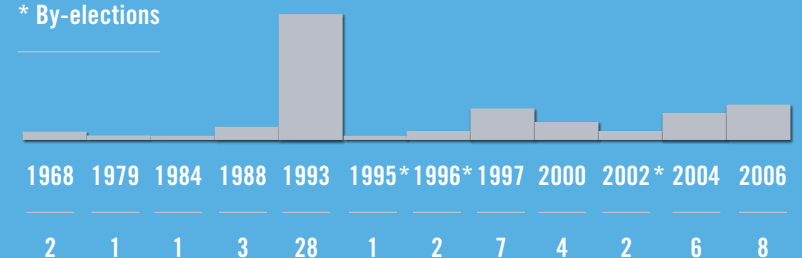
86% of the MPs have at least one college or university degree. Nearly half have more than one degree.

The MPs held a variety of legislative roles, and many held more than one. One served as Prime Minister. 31% were Cabinet Ministers and 35% were Parliamentary Secretaries. 65% held a critic portfolio. 58% chaired at least one committee.

57% of the MPs left politics due to retirement and 43% left as the result of electoral defeat.

YEARS THE MPS WERE FIRST ELECTED

* By-elections



Getting Involved in Politics

The events that started their interest in politics differed just as much as the MPs' backgrounds. Often these were the result of chance rather than choice. "I happened to be reading a local magazine and there was an ad on how you might consider supporting the Reform Party," one MP said. "I submitted my application, my fee, and became a member, still not intending to run for politics."

Many said they got involved because of a political leader. Some had met a particular politician and were interested, or upset, by their remarks. One MP linked his decision to get involved in politics to having met Tommy Douglas, the iconic leader of the New Democratic Party and father of Canadian healthcare. "I had been inspired earlier in my youth by Tommy Douglas, who had been invited to speak at my high school," he said. A few from the Reform Party spoke of meeting Preston Manning, or hearing him give a speech. Others slowly grew to dislike the leadership style of a particular Prime Minister, and wished for something better.

Other MPs found a connection to politics through a particular local, regional or global event. Constitutional debates, the Charlottetown Accord and the Québec referenda of 1980 and 1995 motivated many MPs, particularly those from Québec and the West. "I was very disgusted with some of the things taking place at the federal level, particularly with the idea of bringing home the Constitution and the Charter of Rights in 1982," one former MP said. One Québec MP remarked, "Definitely the 1980 referendum was the platform to launch

my political career...They can package it up any way they want to, but the fact is that the separatists want to divide the country. The country would not be the same, no matter how you slice it."

Several MPs recalled growing up during the 1960s, when the assassinations of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King made them realize that politics matters. Those who'd spent time in other countries saw potential in Canada, and when they returned they viewed politics as a way to bring about change. "I worked on the War on Poverty in Dallas and I could never have conceived of such a vast spread between those who have wealth and those who have nothing," said one MP. "Spending that year in Dallas put a lot of things in stark relief for me, and I came back to Canada feeling really energized politically."

Some were encouraged to get involved by friends or colleagues. One lawyer, who was thinking about becoming a judge, was encouraged by a mentor to consider politics instead. "It would suit your personality better," the future MP was told. Another MP, a financial executive, had a party pamphlet tossed across the table at him during a work negotiation. "You should join this," his colleague said. He read the pamphlet, and was interested. He later joined the party.

Others were influenced by friends who were politically involved. "I had some friends involved in the party. The party had this convention, and CPAC was covering it. I was flipping channels and thought, 'Oh, this is interesting. I'll watch.' I began to listen to what the people at the microphone were talking about. This began to resonate with me...I decided 'I'm going to look the party up in the phone book.' I phoned somebody and they sent me some literature. I read all of this stuff and joined."

What patterns, if any, can be drawn from the experiences of these MPs before they arrived in Ottawa? What conclusions, if any, can you make about the MPs based on their pre-political experiences?

CAREERS BEFORE PARLIAMENT

The MPs we interviewed pursued a range of jobs and professions before entering federal politics. Below is a sample of these parliamentarians' previous careers.

Newspaper editor	High school principal	Historian
Priest	Academic	Electrician
Municipal councillor	Accountant	U.S. Army member
Teacher	Engineer	Police officer
Political assistant	Sales manager	Law school dean
Consultant	United Church minister	Grand Chief
Small business manager	CEO	Nurse
Public servant	Union leader	Bank manager
CFO	Farmer	Community activist
Professor	Lab technician	Lawyer
Canadian Air Force member	Subarctic research lab director	Insurance broker
Provincial cabinet minister	Cook	Quality assurance engineer
Mayor	Probation officer	Director of child and family services
NGO executive	Air traffic controller	School board trustee
Journalist	University president	University vice president
Social worker	Radio station manager	Community college administrator

What is an MP's Job?

In much the same way that the MPs had a wide variety of backgrounds and reasons for getting involved in politics, they had many different ways of describing the role of an MP.

Think about applying for a job. How do you know that the job is right for you? You might look at the job description in the advertisement, and see if it matches your interests, experience, and abilities.

But what would this process look like for a Member of Parliament? Is there a job description that MPs follow? When asked to describe their job, there was little agreement among the MPs. This was surprising, since they had been on the job for, on average, over ten years.

SOME HISTORY

According to Canada's Library of Parliament, an MP in the Westminster system of government—the system, developed in Great Britain, on which the Canadian Parliament is based—has three traditional roles:

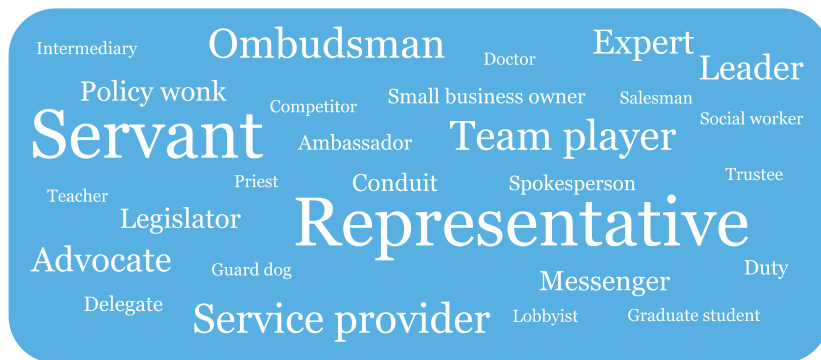
1. consider, refine and pass legislation;
2. hold government accountable for its administration of the laws and authorize government spending;
3. determine the life of the government by providing or withholding support.

In sum, the traditional role of an MP is to establish policy and pass laws, make sure the laws are being carried out properly, and decide whether to support the government or not. Of course this historical definition has evolved over time. Today, MPs perform a variety of roles in addition to those outlined above. Most significantly, they are now responsible for running a constituency office and have duties to their political parties that have developed with a growing population and the evolution of Canada's party system. As it turns out, politics and political life are a lot more complicated now than they used to be.

FIVE CATEGORIES OF JOB DESCRIPTION

Perhaps as a result of the changes in their jobs, none of the MPs in this group used the traditional Westminster definition, and only a few were even close. One MP was even brave enough to acknowledge that he wasn't entirely sure what the job entailed. "I thought an MP should have a clear understanding of what an MP does. But even when I explained it to people, I didn't entirely know...and when I asked others, I didn't get a clear answer," the MP said.

Some of the words MPs used to describe their job



The bigger the word, the more often MPs mentioned it.

When the MPs were asked to describe how they thought of their role, at least five general categories were given. But even within categories, there were still a lot of differences in how the MPs described what is really the same job.

THE PHILOSOPHERS

The first group of MPs are called the "philosophers" because they believed in one of two classic—and competing—philosophical approaches to the job of an elected representative.

- **Trustees** are representatives who do their job based on their personal understanding of the best action to pursue.
- **Delegates** are representatives who do their job based on what their constituents want them to do.

The majority of MPs who defined their roles in philosophical terms described themselves as trustees, elected by the public to use their own judgment in making decisions. One claimed, "I am not there as some kind of thoughtless representation of local views. Voters have chosen me and I have to apply my best judgment to the situation. It may not always be popular with the constituents, but if they wanted a popularity contest or poll, they wouldn't need an MP."

A smaller number of MPs described themselves as delegates, viewing their role as the representatives of their constituents above all else. "They select you to be their representative in Ottawa, to speak for them, to vote on legislation and, in some cases, to develop legislation that they feel is wanted. Basically to work for their interests and to deliver for them whatever benefits might flow," said one MP. "MPs should be in Ottawa to represent their constituents," said another.

Several described the pressure between representing constituents' views and leading the way towards or developing a larger view. "My job was to provide leadership. Not just to reflect the discussion, but also to lead the discussion," said one MP. "I knew I had to represent the voices of my constituents whether I agreed or not...but it didn't mean I championed those causes," said another.

The philosophers represent an important debate over the role of an elected representative. What are some strengths and weaknesses of defining an MP's job as a delegate or a trustee?

At times, the MPs showed annoyance at colleagues who viewed the role differently. One MP who described himself as a trustee suggested that those who saw themselves only as delegates didn't fully appreciate their job. "You're not running for councillor. You're not the alderman here. You are the ambassador to Ottawa," the MP said.

Some delegates showed similar irritation toward those who failed to stay close to their constituents. "I've seen too many people change. You go to Ottawa, and you're the guy next door, and then you come home and you're an important person who doesn't know anybody,"

one MP said. Another argued that MPs quickly fall out of touch with their communities and begin to believe their own rhetoric. “Politicians have become too removed from their own constituents,” he declared.

THE GEOGRAPHERS

For a second group of MPs, the role was described mainly in terms of a balance or choice between supporting local or national interests.

Some MPs felt their main focus should be on the entire country. “The job is coming up with rules that govern our society. Primarily we need to look at it from a Canada-wide perspective. I know it is important to represent your constituents and your province, but I think you have to think about what is happening throughout the whole country,” said one MP.

Other MPs argued that their attention should be on representing local views and beliefs. “MPs should be in Ottawa to represent their constituents,” one MP said. “I think it’s our job—and I always said this—it’s my job to bring the voice of the people to Ottawa and stand up for what we have here,” explained another MP.

Others described it as a balance, although one that was often difficult to find. “It’s a challenge to find a balance...You serve a national interest if you are sitting in Parliament, but you also serve local interests, which is the whole beauty in our system of having constituencies. You are accountable to the country as a whole, but also very specifically to the electors that put you in that office. MPs are driven by both those things.”

MPs who came to Ottawa to represent their local constituents, but then became members of cabinet or gained positions in the party leadership, were forced to change their focus. After all, a minister is expected to take the best interests of all Canadians into consideration in making decisions. Some enjoyed the challenge in this, but others felt that it made their job that much more difficult.

“I believe to the core...that the principal purpose of an MP is to represent constituents...It was more difficult when I became the party

leader because I occupied two roles simultaneously, one of which took you away from your constituents a lot,” one political party leader explained.

A cabinet minister also felt the same way. “The purpose of the MP is to represent, to the best of their ability, the interests of their constituents,” the minister said, before adding that this definition did not match her cabinet experience. “There the focus was on the country.”

For some, this was an energizing challenge. “Part of the job is to try and build the threads that hold the country together...you’ve got to try and encourage people to be bigger than they think they can be in terms of spirit and vision,” the MP said.

For others, the balance was so difficult as to be nearly impossible. “The purpose of an MP is—and our slogan was—to be our riding’s voice in Ottawa, not Ottawa’s voice in our riding. That’s what an MP is. And that’s in direct conflict with the role of cabinet,” the MP said.

THE PARTISANS

A third group of MPs went beyond the trustee/delegate or national/local divisions to emphasize an additional purpose: representing the views of one’s political party. Even so, each described this obligation differently.

Some felt the party and the constituents were the main groups to balance. “The purpose of an MP is to be a leader from your community in the national affairs of the country. On the one hand, you should be listening to the people you represent, and that means whoever is in the community and not just the people who voted for you...On the other hand, you’ve campaigned on your party’s programs and issues and so you also have an obligation to that,” said one MP.

Canada is a very large country. Different provinces, regions, cities and towns often have competing views on what is important. Do you think that an MP should represent local interests, or be a voice for the issues that are important to all Canadians? What are some strengths and weaknesses of each position?

Others felt that their role was to balance the interests of the country with those of the political party. “I can give you the canned thing of why they tell us we’re there and I can share with you what I believe is the truth. In a nutshell, we’re there to adopt national policy for the betterment of all in the country. But the truth is, you’re there to develop policy that is beneficial to your party in order to keep you in power and get you re-elected. That national premise is, kind of, always there, but there is politics involved in everything,” the MP said.

Other MPs also felt this way. “You want to win your seat, because if your party wins enough seats, it will be asked to form the government,” said one. “You have to do what you have to do to get re-elected,” said another.

Others described a different balance still, explaining the role as one that involved balancing responsibilities to one’s constituents, political party and party leader. One described it as a hierarchy, “An MP’s first purpose is to serve his constituents...Second, whether you like it or not, you belong to a team. I think your loyalty to the values and

principles of that political party are important. Third, I think, is loyalty to the leader,” the MP said. For others, it was more straightforward. “You have a mandate to try and implement the things your party ran on,” declared another MP.

Political parties are central to Canadian politics. What role do you think political parties should play in defining the job of an MP? What are some strengths and weaknesses of the partisan definition of an MP’s job?

THE SERVICE PROVIDERS

A fourth set of MPs characterized the job as a combination of developing public policy—whether national or regional in its focus—and providing direct services to constituents. Direct service provision includes helping constituents with a wide variety of casework, such as questions about immigration, employment insurance, passports and veterans’ support, helping constituents benefit from federal programs

or legislation and fulfilling a representative role by attending social occasions or other community events.

MPs in this category recognized that both policy and constituent service work were important, but clearly said that one was more important than the other. “I was not motivated by constituency work,” said one MP, adding that most of it was handled by his riding office staff.

Others described the riding-level work as the most important part of the job. “You’re the ombudsmen. When there’s a federal problem, you’re the go-to-guy. You’re the one that they look to for help because if you can’t help them, who can?

You either help or put them in touch with someone who can. You listen to their problem,” another MP explained.

Whether one’s riding was urban or rural also influenced how MPs chose between local service and policy work. Many MPs from rural ridings, for example, emphasized that constituents expected them to be present in their riding, focusing on local concerns. “My first riding was 20 percent rural, and they were much more demanding. They want their MPs at everybody’s 40th birthday celebration...I didn’t miss it when they redistributed my riding and it became a totally urban riding. The demands from the rural constituents, socially, were as heavy as from the urban 80 percent,” one MP said.

Constituency work was important to many of the MPs interviewed. Do you think MPs should focus on making policy, or making sure their constituents benefit from that policy? Or if it should be a balance of the two, how should an MP decide what’s most important?

MPs were often quite forceful about where a Parliamentarian’s emphasis should be. One urban MP was sympathetic to the demands of his rural colleagues, but still believed that the role in Ottawa was the most important. “To do your duty in a rural riding, you can’t be an absentee MP. But the job is in Ottawa, ultimately, and that’s what they pay you for,” the MP said.

Yet another MP was even more direct on this point. “People elect you to be in Parliament. They don’t elect you to schmooze with them in the constituency...This whole constituency thing becomes, I worry, a kind of substitute for real input and activity,” the MP said.

Some MPs did not want to place too strong an emphasis on policy. “I didn’t want to be a highfalutin MP,” one said, adding that his main focus was on his constituency. “If you forget your roots, they’ll forget you.”

Others felt no such pressure. “I thought of my role this way: In the riding, I’m dealing with the law as it now stands; in Ottawa, the role was future-oriented. How things could be changed, how things could be improved,” she said.

NONE OF THE ABOVE

The final group of MPs did not fit into the above-mentioned categories, using more informal descriptions that made little or no reference to definitions of representation or to their political party. These descriptions ranged from clichés to personal observations, from inspiring statements of purpose to definitions that bordered on the absurd.

One described the role of an MP as a means of professional advancement. “The MP’s role is an opportunity for useful, intelligent people to have a good time...You have such a variety of different things to do... You can talk to anyone, you can learn anything. Some people describe it as the best graduate degree in the world,” the MP said.

Some regarded the role as a call to service. “Being an MP is not a job, it’s a calling, a way of life. You are one of the lucky people to ever get there,” one MP said. “I think the role should be thought of as a professional service honour. Public service is something that can be very good for the country,” said another.

Other MPs described a main part of their role as bringing their own personal identity into Parliament. One female MP, elected less than a decade after she’d completed university, said that representing her demographic was her main job. “I have a responsibility for broader

MPS HAD VASTLY DIFFERENT VIEWS ON THE ESSENTIAL PURPOSE OF THEIR ROLE

THE PHILOSOPHERS

MPs who expressed sharp philosophical differences: some believed their job was to directly represent the views of their constituents; some stated that their job was to develop their own perspective on the best course of action and others said they had to find a balance between the two.

THE GEOGRAPHERS

MPs who defined the role as a choice—or a balance, depending on the MP—between advancing local versus national interests. The role was also confused by the different requirements placed on cabinet ministers and backbenchers.

THE PARTISANS

MPs who emphasized acting in the interests of a political party. Again, interpretations of the appropriate balance of this role with other obligations varied dramatically.

THE SERVICE PROVIDERS

MPs who defined the role as a choice between focusing on developing laws and policies versus providing more direct service to constituents. This distinction was further highlighted by the differences between urban and rural ridings. The tensions marked by these different interpretations were described in detail.

THE NONE-OF-THE-ABOVERS

MPs who interpreted the role in more personal ways. Some described their role as bringing an aspect of symbolic representation—such as one’s ethnic identity—into politics. Others viewed it as a call to service or an opportunity “to make a difference” (interpreted in various ways). This group gave a laundry list of colloquial descriptions that often bore little resemblance to, and were often in direct conflict with, one another.

representation and involvement with young people and women... I have an obligation to speak up,” the MP said. Another proudly remembered, “I was the first Greek-born woman elected to the House of Commons...A lot of young women in the community saw me as a role model.”

One Aboriginal MP described his role as being a channel for his community. “They don’t see you as a party member, they see you as you, and say, ‘Screw the political party affiliations, you better do what is good for our people,’” the MP said. A Bloc MP described his job as representing Québec internationally, and interacting with ambassadors of other countries. “Bloc MPs have a big role at the interna-

tional level...as a representative of Québec,” he said.

Another group of MPs compared the role to many other jobs that had little in common, save perhaps for their heavy interaction with people. These jobs included: administrator, doctor, priest, teacher,

MPs described their job in a number of different ways. What do you think this means for politics in Canada? Is it a strength or weakness for Canadian democracy? What would the benefits be to having a job description for MPs? What would be the drawbacks?

ambassador, social worker, messenger, spokesperson and lobbyist. One MP compared the role to that of a “guard dog.”

Several MPs who compared the role to other jobs also made direct connections to their own jobs before they were MPs. One MP, an accountant and executive, compared the role to running a small business. Another MP compared it with running two businesses. Another, a lawyer and mediator, said the role was about building relationships. “The whole story of Parliament is human relationships at the level of the MP. We do that in our daily life in our communities: we build relationships; we build networks,” the MP said.

Conclusion

These exit interviews found that the backgrounds of the Members of Parliament who were interviewed did not line up with what one might think of as the stereotypical politician. The MPs didn’t all have degrees in law or political science. Many didn’t have a lifelong interest in politics. In fact, the interviews showed that there is no typical background for an MP. Anyone has the chance to get elected, given a certain amount of dedication, determination, and luck at the ballot box. It was a surprise to hear these things from the MPs, given that their stories ran counter to what many Canadians think of their politicians.

What do you think an MP’s job should be? Did you agree with the delegates or the trustees? Should an MP be more concerned with their constituents’ views, the national interest, or their party? Do you think there is a way to balance these competing elements?

It was also unexpected to hear how little agreement existed in the MPs’ definitions of what is the same job, particularly since they had spent an average of ten years as an MP.

To some degree, this difference should be expected: the job of an MP is complex, and involves many competing responsibilities. And since Canada is a culturally, regionally, economically and politically diverse country, some may argue that such mixed descriptions of an MP’s job are to be expected. “It’s a question that will be answered, probably, in as many different ways as there are Members of Parliament and will probably change with the historic development of the country,” one MP admitted.

But it may be worth asking if Canadians should expect their elected representatives to have a better understanding of their job. Canadians need to know what to expect from their MPs—but if the MPs themselves can’t agree on what they are supposed to be doing in Ottawa, how can Canadians know what to expect from them?

Glossary

AFFILIATION

Affiliation means belonging to a group. The MPs each had a “party affiliation” which meant that they belonged to a political party.

CONSTITUENTS

Constituents are the residents of a particular geographical location, called a constituency, that are represented by a particular politician. Canada has 308 federal constituencies.

DEMOGRAPHIC

A demographic is a specific section of the population, such as women or men, or people of a certain age range. People who study society often break the population into these groups to compare them to each other. For instance, we could compare the number of voters aged 18-24 with the number of voters aged 25-35, and then determine which age group is more likely to vote.

EXIT INTERVIEWS

Questions that organizations ask their employees once they leave the workplace. The answers are used to improve how the organization functions.

LOCAL

If something is local, it means that it relates to a specific place. You might refer to your local grocery store, which would be the one closest to your house.

NATIONAL

The term “national” refers to the whole country. It can also mean the federal government, since this level of government covers the entire country.

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

A non-profit organization does not distribute the money it makes to its owners or shareholders, but instead uses it to pursue its goals. These organizations are often motivated to help society in some way.

PHILOSOPHER

Philosophy is literally a love of knowledge, so a philosopher is someone who loves knowledge. We called some of the MPs “philosophers” because they described their role in terms that political philosophers often use.

PUBLIC POLICY

A policy is a plan of action that has been decided upon for an organization. Public policy is the policy that guides the decision-making of governments. It is set by the elected officials in the government.

PUBLIC SERVICE

Public service can refer to two things. It can refer to the people who work in government offices, and carry out the government’s priorities. They are also known as “the bureaucracy” as a whole, or “bureaucrats” as individuals. It can also refer to someone’s actions that serve the people of his or her town, city, province, or country.

REGIONAL

A region is a geographical area that usually encompasses several provinces. For instance, “central Canada” is a region composed of Ontario and Québec; “the Maritimes” is a region composed of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. Something that is regional is specific to a region.

RURAL

Rural places have fewer people living far apart, and rural often refers to the countryside or farming communities.

URBAN

Urban places are densely populated, such as cities or towns.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To join the conversation, learn more about the project, and what the MPs said about their time in Ottawa and about Canadian democracy, please visit the MP Exit Interview section of Samara's website, www.samaracanada.com. There are four reports, and lots of interesting information, some of which might help you with school assignments.

You'll also find more information on the pre-parliamentary backgrounds of MPs in Samara's blog posts on MPs elected in the last two elections:

www.SamaraCanada.com/link/40thParliament

www.SamaraCanada.com/link/41stParliament

For a list of former MPs who participated in the exit interviews, please visit:

www.SamaraCanada.com/link/NamesOfParticipatingMPs



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